

****Reducing the mental health and wellbeing impacts of flooding:
Informing cross-policy action in Scotland****

The Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW) intends to commission a **Capacity Building project** aligned with CREW's Hydrological Extremes, Coasts and Risk Management Theme to develop an understanding of effective cross-policy actions that could be implemented in Scotland to mitigate the negative mental health and broader wellbeing impacts of all types of flooding.

Background

Flooding has been identified as one of the [key climate-related risks](#) to health in Scotland. The [Climate Change Committee](#) has emphasised that effective recovery from extreme weather events, such as flooding, requires not only physical protection measures but also provision of psychological support. It recognises mental health and wellbeing as central components to community preparedness and resilience. A recent [ClimateXChange report](#) provides a high-level overview of the emerging evidence of the impacts of climate change on mental health, while the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is currently undertaking a UK wide [special assessment report](#) on climate change and mental health. [Scotland's Flood Resilience Strategy](#) notes that flooding has immediate and long-lasting effects, with impacts extending beyond physical damage to affect people's health and wellbeing long after the flooding event itself. In parallel, Scotland's new [Population Health Framework](#), highlights climate change as a fundamental driver of health outcomes, and its underlying impact across socio-economic determinants. The framework advocates for continued cross-sector collaboration to minimise harms associated with adverse weather events, including flooding, as set out in the [Public Health Scotland Adverse Weather Plan \(2024-2027\)](#).

A CREW policy brief, [Building Public Health Resilience to Fluvial Flooding in Scotland](#), highlighted the need for further research on interventions that can protect and improve mental health and wellbeing, before, during and after flooding. The brief emphasised the importance of understanding which measures are most effective, particularly for vulnerable populations, and noted that evaluating how property flood resilience measures could affect mental health outcomes was a key research gap. A recent [scoping review](#) by Public Health Wales on psychological interventions to support mental health and wellbeing in flood-affected communities has begun to address these gaps. While the review highlighted a shortage of high-quality evidence on the topic area, it was limited to secondary studies, and excluded wider interventions (e.g. property level adaptations, community measures), that may also reduce the impacts on mental health and wellbeing.

In anticipation of cross-policy development required to respond to the [Fourth Climate Change Risk Assessment](#) (CCRA4), which will place a greater emphasis on climate and health, there is a timely need to advance understanding of interventions that can reduce the short and long term mental health and wellbeing effects of flooding. A full systematic review that incorporates peer-reviewed and grey literature, and considers both psychological and wider adaptation interventions, would help address this gap. This will help to inform the delivery of [Scotland's Flood Resilience Strategy](#), [National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029](#), and contribute to cross policy efforts to mitigate the negative mental health and broader wellbeing impacts of all types of flooding, including coastal change. Strengthening the evidence base in this area is critical for shaping future climate and health policy in Scotland and ensuring that vulnerable individuals and communities are better supported in the face of increasing flood risk.

The Aim

CREW invites proposals for a c.5-month capacity building project.

Aim: To develop a detailed understanding of effective cross-policy actions that could be implemented in Scotland to mitigate the negative mental health and broader wellbeing¹ impacts of all types of flooding, including coastal change.

The Scope

This project has two workstreams, anticipated to run concurrently.

Workstream 1 – Systematic Review: Through a full systematic review², the following questions will be addressed:

1. What interventions, including socio-economic, health, property, nature-based and community, could help mitigate the direct negative mental health and broader wellbeing impacts of flooding (of all types, including that related to coastal change)?
2. To what extent are these interventions applicable, relevant and effective in the Scottish context for different individuals or groups—particularly those at risk of poorer mental health outcomes and flooding?

Additional information:

- ❖ While the systematic review focus is on interventions, it is expected that the report will include a brief overview of the direct negative mental health and wellbeing impacts of flooding (of all types, including that related to coastal change), to set the scene to the report.
- ❖ Insights into practical actions/solutions/interventions that are suitable for a cross-policy approach to development and implementation in Scotland is a key focus. Of particular interest are actions targeted towards prevention and interventions across the adaption, preparedness, emergency response and post flood pathway.
- ❖ The promotion of mental wellbeing and early or low intensity interventions for mild or sub-clinical mental health conditions should also be considered.

Researcher expertise in public and population health, mental health and wellbeing, climate-related health impacts and health inequalities is essential for workstream 1 of this project. Previous experience in undertaking a full systematic review is also essential

Workstream 2 – Desk-based Policy Review: Through a desk-based review of Scottish and international policy, the following questions will be addressed:

3. What cross-policy actions are being implemented in countries with similar geographic and socio-economic characteristics to Scotland to mitigate the impacts of flooding on mental health and wellbeing?
4. How could different policy areas in Scotland connect and work together to address impacts of flooding on mental health and wellbeing?

Researcher expertise in public policy analysis and in translating evidence into policy recommendations relevant to health, wellbeing and climate adaptation is essential for workstream 2.

¹ Mental health and mental wellbeing are variously defined but for the purpose of this project, the definitions used in the [Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) should be followed.

² The review should draw on Scottish and International evidence, including primary, secondary and grey literature.

Deliverables

Workstream 1 Deliverables:

- **A report section** summarising the full systematic review methodology and findings, addressing Questions 1 and 2 (c.12-15 pages).

Workstream 2 Deliverables:

- **Policy mapping** using a systems-thinking approach to illustrate potential links and interconnections between different Scottish policies addressing the impacts of flooding on mental health and wellbeing (c.1-2 pages)
- **A report section** summarising the policy review findings and addressing Questions 3 and 4. Insights during from Phase 1 should be integrated, with clear linkages between phases. (c.7-8 pages)

Overall deliverables (Workstreams 1 & 2):

- **One final report** encompassing both Workstream 1 & 2 report sections, the policy mapping, an overarching executive summary, introduction, recommendations, and conclusion (c.30 pages, excluding appendices)
- **Policy brief** summarising key policy findings and recommendations (c.4-5 pages)
- **A plain English Summary** (1-2 pages)
- **Website summary** (including image or photograph) (c.200 words)
- **A communications and impact plan** to guide project dissemination and consider project impact during and after the project.

Project Meetings/events:

- 3 Project Steering Group meetings online (throughout the project lifecycle).
- A dissemination webinar to present project findings and recommendations at the end of the project.

Intended impacts

There are multiple pathways for a project to achieve impact, and multiple factors that can impact the project's ability to achieve what it intends to do; both along the project lifecycle (A.IMPACT) and beyond project completion (B.IMPACT) (Figure 1).

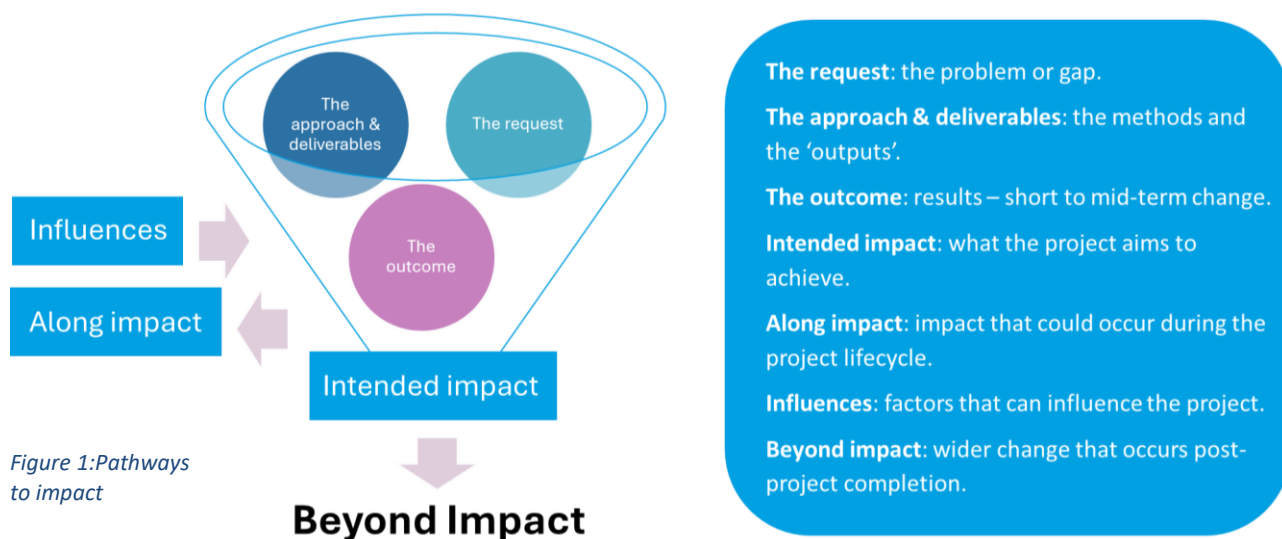


Figure 1: Pathways to impact

Along Impact (A.Impact):

- These key stakeholders are anticipated to support this project as part of the project steering group: Scottish Government, SEPA, Scottish Flood Forum (SFF) and Public Health Scotland (PHS)
- These wider stakeholders may be interested in the project's findings and recommendations: NatureScot, CXC, Scottish Association for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, COSLA

Beyond Impact (B.Impact):

The project's deliverables will support the development of policy actions and strengthen connections across policy areas. It will help inform cross-policy measures to mitigate the mental health and wellbeing impacts of flooding, supporting the *Population Health Framework*, the *PHS Adverse Weather and Health Plan* and development of *CCRA4*. The outputs will provide evidence for policy and practice and promote multi-disciplinary approached to climate-related health challenges in Scotland.

Further information for applicants

Eligibility

CREW Capacity Building funding is open to applications from **all relevant Scottish HEIs and Research Institutes (approved subcontractors)**. One eligible organisation must lead the bid, however an eligible organisation can sub-contract work in accordance with the Grant Terms which would include putting in place an appropriate agreement with the relevant sub-contractor(s) (updated December 2022). Any UK based HEI, RI or SME can be sub-contracted. Where successful, CREW funding would be subject to agreement to the CREW Grant Offer Letter and T&Cs ("Grant Terms"). CREW encourages applications from experienced to early career researchers (ECRs) under the supervision and mentorship of experienced researchers.

Expectations and award criteria

A copy of expectations and the award criteria are provided on page 6 and 7 respectively.

Project management

Day-to-day communication will be between the research/review team (the contractor) and a CREW Project Manager and is likely to involve short catchups as agreed.

Pre-contract meeting

A CREW representative, and representatives of Scottish Government, SEPA, Scottish Flood Forum and Public Health Scotland, will meet with the preferred bidder(s) for a pre-contract meeting.

A pre-contract meeting between will take place on the **27th/28th of October**.

Anticipated timescale (c. 5 months)

- The project will commence approximately **3rd November 2025**, depending on contract processing and signature.
- The first Project Steering Group meeting should take place at the **start of December 2025**.
- A first draft of the Workstream 1 report section should be shared with the Project Steering Group for their review and feedback no later than the **6th January 2026**. *Please allow 2-weeks for the PSG to review and provide feedback.*
- The second Project Steering Group meeting should take place **21st, 22nd or 26th January 2026**.
- A first draft of the Workstream 2 report section and the policy mapping should be shared to the Project Steering Group for review no later than the **26th January 2026**. *Please allow 2-weeks for the PSG to review and provide feedback.*
- A first draft of the policy brief, final report (which encompasses both Workstreams 1 & 2 report sections, executive summary, introduction, recommendations and conclusion), plain English summary, and website summary should be shared with the Project Steering Group for their review and feedback no later than the **17th February 2026**. *Please allow 2-weeks for the PSG to review and provide feedback.*
- The third Project Steering Group meeting should take place the **at the start of March 2026**.
- A second draft of the policy brief, final report (which encompasses both Workstreams 1 & 2 report sections as well as an overarching executive summary, introduction, recommendations and conclusion), plain English summary, and website summary should be shared with the Project Steering

Group for their review and feedback no later than the **11th March 2026**. *Please allow 2-weeks for the PSG to review and provide feedback.*

- The research team should present their findings at a webinar **at the end of the project (timing TBC)**.
- All final project deliverables should be submitted for sign off by **31st March 2026**. It is intended that formatting will take place in April.

Funding

The maximum amount of funding available **exclusive of VAT** (where applicable) is **£70,000**

Submitting a proposal

Please complete a **CREW Capacity Building Application form** outlining your proposal.

Proposals need to be submitted to Procurement@crew.ac.uk for evaluation **by Tuesday 7th October, midday**. We aim to notify the preferred bidder by **c. wb.20th October 2025**.

Please contact Procurement@crew.ac.uk by **Tuesday 30th September 2025** if you would like any clarification on any of the above. You should highlight any potential conflicts of interest in your proposal. For queries about what may constitute a potential conflict of interest please contact the CREW Manager (Nikki.Dodd@hutton.ac.uk).

Expectations

No.	Criteria	Descriptor
1	Duration	The proposed duration will align closely to the details provided in the anticipated timescales section of the specification.
2	Staff time and effort	The proposed allocation of staff time and effort is appropriate and includes all deliverables. The proposal provides a commitment that named staff members will be available to work on the contract if the bid is successful. For any unnamed staff, appropriate risk identification and mitigation measures are provided.
3	Project costs	The estimated breakdown of project costs is realistic and inclusive of all milestones/deliverables/activities.

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Award criteria

No.	Criteria	Descriptor
1	Understanding the project ask and policy background	The proposal should include an introduction which demonstrates a clear understanding of the project requirements. This should include an understanding of the policy background and the supporting role of this project; the need for this research; the project aim; and how the proposal will address this aim.
2	Proposed methodology	The proposal should demonstrate a high quality and workable methodology, including how the evidence will be identified, reviewed, and assessed; consulting relevant stakeholders and/or experts where appropriate to address the aim and key questions and, produce the deliverables in the timescales required. It should explain the suitability, robustness, and limitations of the proposed methodology. Please include details of your proposed systematic review search strategy and policy review methodology.
3	Milestones	The project milestones are logical, practical and include all deliverables.
4	Project Management	The staff, resources and expertise are appropriate for conducting the proposed project. The proposal should name the project lead and outline their project management experience.
5	General and specific topic expertise and experience	The proposal should provide details of individual staff members who will work on this project and demonstrate how they will meet the project requirements, specifically: - general research experience and expertise; - specific experience and expertise in public and population health, mental health and wellbeing, climate-related health impacts, health inequalities and public policy analysis
6	General communication and deliverables	The proposal should describe the approach to producing the deliverables, which will be published on the CREW website. It should detail who will take lead responsibility for report-writing and overall report quality. It should provide examples of previously published reports and outputs in which they have been involved relevant to this project.
7	Quality assurance	The proposal should provide details of quality assurance procedures to demonstrate how the contract will be continuously delivered to a high standard. It should specifically address issues of quality control at different stages of the project, including evidence gathering, analysis and report writing. It should include a timetable for delivery of tasks, project milestones and allocation of staff and staff time against each task, covering the duration of the contract.
8	Risk	The proposal should provide a risk assessment matrix detailing any risks identified in relation to the delivery of this contract, and proposed mitigation measures to minimise their probability and impact, focused particularly on risk to completion on time.

Annex A – Relevant documents to this project

- [Building Public Health Resilience to Fluvial Flooding in Scotland](#) – CREW
- [Effective future communication of flood risk in Scotland](#) - CREW
- Impacts of Flooding in North-East Scotland - [comprehensive report](#) and [summary report](#) – CREW
- [National Flood Resilience Strategy](#)
- [Evidence for the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA3\)](#)
- [CCC Adaptation Monitoring Framework - Climate Change Committee](#)
- [Supporting documents - Scotland's Population Health Framework](#)
- [Protecting the population from the negative health and wellbeing impacts of adverse weather: Public Health Scotland plan 2024-2027](#)
- [Mental health and climate change in the UK: call for evidence - GOV.UK](#)
- [What interventions are effective to support people's mental health and wellbeing \(a\) in areas at risk of flooding; and \(b\) after a flood has occurred: An agile scope of the literature](#)
- [Scottish National Adaptation Plan \(2024-2029\)](#)
- [Mental health and wellbeing strategy](#)