

National Flood Risk Assessment for Flood Risk Management in Scotland 2024

Review summary

Overview

What is the National Flood Risk Assessment?

The National Flood Risk Assessment (NFRA) carried out by SEPA and published in 2018, serves as Scotland's most recent comprehensive assessment of flood risk. It considers the potential impact of flooding on human health, economic activity, the environment, and cultural heritage. The NFRA supports SEPA's statutory duties under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 (the FRM Act), in 2024 this is primarily the identification of Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs). PVAs are areas where highest flood risk exists now or is likely to occur in the future and form the foundation of the flood risk management plans.

You can view the NFRA 2018 here: [NFRA 2018](#)

Why did we review the National Flood Risk Assessment in 2024?

A key requirement of the FRM Act is that SEPA must review and where appropriate update the NFRA every 6 years and this was last undertaken in 2018.

Our understanding of flood risk is constantly developing and improving. It is not a static field of work and therefore periodic review and update is essential to ensure we effectively support flood risk management in Scotland.

How did we review the National Flood Risk Assessment in 2024?

In accordance with the FRM Act, the review used 'available and readily derivable information' and focused on data acquired since 2018. This was made up of:

- The Observed Flooding Events (OFE) database – a dataset of flood events that have been submitted to SEPA.
- Public and partner feedback in previous FRM related consultations (the PVA consultation 2018 and the FRM Plans consultation in 2020-21).
- Flood studies submitted to SEPA.

The overall aim of the NFRA review was to flag areas where our understanding of flood risk may have substantively changed (increased or decreased) since 2018. This information was then used in the PVA review, where PVAs for the next cycle of flood risk management planning (2028-2034) were identified in partnership with local authorities, and through engagement with the public and other partners via our consultation process.

What was the outcome of the review?

Overall, the NFRA 2018 outputs remain the appropriate source of SEPA's flood risk assessment information for the designation of PVAs.

The NFRA review process generated a list of communities where there was information to indicate a potential substantive change in the understanding of risk. This information was used to inform the review and identification of the PVAs for use in 2028-2034.

You can view the PVA consultation outcomes here: [We Asked, You Said, We Did - Scottish Environment Protection Agency - Citizen Space](#)

Summary

The review of the National Flood Risk Assessment (NFRA) 2018 has been essential to ensure that the identification of Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) is based on suitable information. Both the NFRA review and the PVA review were due by December 2024, as stated in the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 (the FRM Act). The reviewed and updated PVAs will be used in the next cycle of flood risk management planning. This covers the years 2028-2034.

In accordance with the FRM Act, the NFRA review used 'available and readily derivable information'. A wholesale update to the NFRA has not been undertaken in 2024 due to the timing of other flood hazard map updates. The NFRA was developed based on SEPA's flood hazard data and data on receptors (e.g. number of homes and businesses). There is a significant update to the surface water flood hazard maps planned for early 2025. SEPA's next update of flood risk data will be planned for after this date, so the new flood hazard information can be incorporated.

The NFRA review was designed to be straightforward, avoiding major changes in methodology, and focussed on supporting the PVA review and upcoming work on flood risk data. The benefit of this approach includes:

- Compliance with the FRM Act's legal requirements.
- A practical framework for re-evaluating areas at risk of flooding.
- Using the most up to date information for the PVA review.

The NFRA review focussed on those communities that were not previously designated as higher risk as well as those communities that just crossed the threshold to that level of higher risk. The review did not focus on known very high-risk flood areas. Very high-risk communities generally have a better understanding of flood risk and need to remain prioritised through PVA designation. Any substantive changes found were recorded, resulting in a list of communities where there was information to indicate a potential change in the understanding of risk. This list was used in discussions with local authorities for the PVA review process.

The overall conclusion from the NFRA review was that there were generally minimal differences in flood risk since 2018 that would impact PVA designation. The NFRA review has shown that the NFRA 2018 continues to serve as the appropriate foundation for SEPA's flood risk assessment data.

This document is a summary of the NFRA review process. A full report is available on request by contacting frmplanning@sepa.org.uk.

If you would like this document in an accessible format, such as large print, audio recording or braille, please contact SEPA by emailing equalities@sepa.org.uk