



## Are you flood ready?

### Lesson 5: Getting the message across

#### Key Ideas:

- How can we know if a flood is coming?
- There is a range of media available through which flood warnings can be issued, and varying population characteristics mean that a range of media will always be required.
- Perhaps care needs to be taken by agencies not to issue warnings too frequently, else people may stop listening.

#### Starter activity:

*He's behind you!*

How do we know when danger is looking over our shoulder? This lesson will start by offering an overview of meteorological forecasting and flood prediction science. The idea of lead times (warning times) can be introduced, using the available *PowerPoint* presentation. But even when scientists have information telling them a flood is coming, how do we make sure the public actually receive a warning message? How will we know that "he's behind you!" if we don't actually hear anyone shouting it at us?

#### Main activity:

*Something old, something new*

There are a number of flood warning techniques – some are traditional (meaning that they have been around for many years) and some are more "hi-tech" (using digital technology, and these have only been around for a few years). Students can be given a card sorting exercise to complete, creating two piles, "old" and "new". Examples of OLDER METHODS include door knocking by neighbours or flood sirens (left over from the Second World War). NEWER METHODS include warnings sent by mobile telephone and SMS text messaging.

*Helping vulnerable groups*

Why might some flood warning methods suit some types of people better than other? Groups to consider include:

- Visually impaired people
- Hard-of-hearing people
- Elderly or disabled people
- People who are out travelling about
- People who are in their homes
- Children who are at school
- Workers who are in offices
- Migrant workers who don't understand English very well

At first, students can work in groups to brainstorm which of the flood warning methods (old or new) would work best with each group. Then they can be given the fact-sheet provided to see how it compares with the suggestions that they made.

#### Plenary:

*Crying wolf*

The lesson ends with a PowerPoint summary of the lesson ('getting the message') and then a brief think about what lessons can be learned from Aesop's famous fable. How often should flood warnings be issued if we don't want people to start ignoring them?