



PARTNER COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES FOR BRANCH OUT FUNDING

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This document aims to ensure efficient communication between partners and the Northumbrian Water Group (NWG) along with communications to the public. Some of the information you can expect to find in this pack includes:

- An overview of what is expected from the partnership by NWG
- Guidelines for standardisation of branding
- Information highlighting some different opportunities for partnership working, with appropriate contacts
- Communication guidelines and templates for announcing the award of funding

BRANCH OUT SCHEME

Northumbrian Water Group (NWG) incorporates Northumbrian Water (NW) and Essex & Suffolk Water (ESW). NWG's environmental ambition has been published in 'Restore and regenerate: Our Environment Strategy to 2050' and is "Together, we are restoring and regenerating our natural environment, creating a better place through our actions."

Branch Out allows NWG support partnership projects that reconnect habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife, building resilience to our region whilst bringing benefits to water, wildlife and communities.

OUR EXPECTATIONS OF PARTNERS

In accepting Branch Out funding from NWG, you have agreed to work in partnership with us to improve the natural environment within Northumbrian Water / Essex & Suffolk Water's operating area. We request that you consider a number of communication activities which could be undertaken to support the delivery of and promotion of the project to customers and communities. This document outlines these opportunities and includes our branding and communication guidelines, along with some useful key contacts at NWG.

We expect you to acknowledge funding from [Northumbrian Water / Essex & Suffolk Water] in any project communications and publicity (interviews, press releases, public statements, social media and public communications), which includes using our logos to promote our contribution to the project, following our brand guidelines.

As a minimum the following statement should be included in communications activity: '*This project is/was supported by Branch Out funding from [Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water]*'

Section 4 of your Funding Agreement further sets out NWG's publicity expectations relating to projects supported by Branch Out funding.

The covering letter issued with your funding agreement specifies your key contact for the project, and this guidance also includes several communications inboxes for you to contact NWG for support. If you have any general queries these can also be addressed to branchout@nwl.co.uk.

BRANDING GUIDELINES

We request that all projects in receipt of Branch Out funding acknowledge the contribution from [Northumbrian Water / Essex & Suffolk Water] in written materials and verbal statements where appropriate.

Please ensure you always use one of these approved logos alongside the below Branch Out logo for your region:



We will issue you with our logos, together with brand guidelines on how to use them, on initiation of your project. If you require a logo in a different format please contact: externalcommunications@nwl.co.uk

A summary checklist of when you should/can use the [Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water] logo includes:

- ✓ Education materials
- ✓ Signs such as interpretation boards, signpost on site
- ✓ Employee / Volunteer clothing if part of the funded project
- ✓ Communications or events associated with the funded project

When not to use the [Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water] logo:

- ✗ Partners' everyday stationary, including business cards
- ✗ An organisation's offices and office equipment
- ✗ Employee / volunteer clothing, unless for programme delivery
- ✗ Small goods (for example, pens, mugs, toothbrushes etc.)

We do not need to approve the use of our logos if all guidance in this document is followed, and our brand guidelines are adhered to. However, any materials where our branding is featured must not be damaging to the reputation of [Northumbrian Water / Essex & Suffolk Water].

NWG VOLUNTEER SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS

We encourage all our employees to work with community and charitable organisations through our employee volunteering scheme, Just an Hour. This scheme allows employees to give a minimum of 15 hours of work time every year to support causes close to their hearts.

If your project offers the opportunity for our employees to support your activities, please let us know by contacting justanhour@nwl.co.uk, copying in your key contact. Our Partnerships team will be able to help advertise the activity within the company and recruit willing volunteers to support delivery of the project.

Examples of popular volunteer activities which have been supported in the past include event support, schools' engagement, campaign activity, litter picks and environmental activities including river restoration, tree planting and beach surveys.

Supporting Events

For specific support at any events associated with your project such as request for speakers or promotion of specific campaigns please contact us to discuss how we can support by contacting communities@nwl.co.uk.

HELP NWG PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

We are proud to work with our environmental partners to help protect the natural environment in our regions. As a partner delivering an environmental project, your staff and volunteers can be additional eyes and ears on the ground to identify environmental issues and you can help us in promoting key environmental messages to customers and communities.

Reporting of Issues

If you see something that relates to our activities that does not look right, for example a water leak, a pipe discharging to a watercourse in dry weather, or a potential pollution issue, please let us know.

Northumbrian Water Areas

Any observed in-river or coastal issues which appear to be discharges related to a pipe or outfalls (e.g. milky or coloured discharge) should be assumed to relate to Northumbrian Water assets and will be considered high priority as potential or future pollution incidents.

These should be reported immediately to the **Northumbrian Water Operations Line on 0345 7171100**.

Reports will be passed to NW's technical team for immediate attention and 'self-reported' to the Environment Agency. Reporting to NW first ensures we can get our teams there as quickly as possible as there can be delays in receiving notifications through 3rd parties.

Any observed in-river or coastal issues which do not appear to be related to a pipe or outfall but are considered of immediate concern should be reported directly to the **Environment Agency's Incident Hotline on 0800 807060**.

Essex & Suffolk Water Areas

Essex & Suffolk Water only provide water services. For any issues relating to water services please contact **Essex & Suffolk Water on 0345 782 0999**. If you have spotted an emergency water leak, then please **call 0800 526 337**.

For any sewerage and wastewater issues, which appear to be related to a pipe or outfalls (e.g., milky or coloured discharge) please contact your relevant supplier which will either be **Thames Water (0800 3169800) or Anglian Water (03457 145145)**.

Any observed in-river or coastal issues which do not appear to be related to a pipe or outfall but are considered of immediate concern should be reported directly to the **Environment Agency's Incident Hotline on 0800 807060**.

Supporting Our Campaigns

We have a number of key environmental campaigns underway at [Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water] and also our customer campaign to help support customers with financial support and priority services. If your projects can support our campaign activities, then please let us know by contacting: **externalcommunications@nwl.co.uk**

- Bin the Wipe - [Bin the wipe \(nwl.co.uk\)](#)
- Refill - [Refill \(nwl.co.uk\)](#)
- Water efficiency campaigns - [Save water \(nwl.co.uk\)](#) / [Save water \(eswater.co.uk\)](#)
- Financial support - [Financial support \(nwl.co.uk\)](#) / [Financial support \(eswater.co.uk\)](#)
- Priority Services - [Priority Services \(nwl.co.uk\)](#) / [Priority Services \(eswater.co.uk\)](#)

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Announcing and promoting your funding award

When to do it - we will be in touch with you when it is time to announce your funding award.

Please wait until after:

- Your funding agreement has been signed, and payment has been received.
- A formal announcement has been made by Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water through a press release, social media and on the websites. We will inform you once this is due to take place and arrange for a photograph to be taken for use in the announcement and any corporate documents/website pages/etc.

Ideas on how you could promote your funding award and annual update

1. Consider the audiences you would like to reach
2. Think about how they like to receive information
3. Agree timing of announcement and annual update releases with Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water

Possible approaches could include:

- Social media
- Direct email to supporters
- A news piece on your website or partner websites
- A news piece in your newsletter or organisation's magazine
- Media activity (sending out a press release to local newspapers, magazines or radio)
- Events

Top tips for your communications

- Always include a line on why your project is important and the estimated impact of the project.
- Include an image in all your communications – ideally with a representative from Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water.
- Include Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water logo (remembering to adhere to brand guidelines).
- Acknowledge that you have received funding from Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water - for example '*This project has been supported by Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water*'

Drafting a press release

When you are ready to announce your funding, you may want to create a press release to share your news with your local media. Before you write a press release about your funding, decide exactly who your audience is and keep them in mind when you write it. If you are targeting the release at regional media make sure to include your organisation's location in the title, for example: 'Durham-based charity receives funding from Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water's Branch Out fund to plant 5km of hedgerow in Bishop Auckland'.

Sample press release is on page 9.

Media contacts

Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water External Communications team are happy to review and work collaboratively press release. We can check the messaging and help to amplify your reach when your story is published. Please also share coverage on your social media accounts and tag us in – our social media account details are below.

If your project receives any negative media coverage, please contact our **Media Hotline on 0333 321 4841** as soon as possible so that we are aware and can help advise you on how best to respond, if required.

Contact your local MP

We recommend you write to your local MP to announce your funding. You could invite them to project-related events where appropriate, follow them on social media and tag them in updated. We can help in providing a draft template.

Using social media to promote your announcement and ongoing messaging

- Follow us on:
 - Twitter - @NorthumbrianH2O / @ESWH2O
 - Facebook – Northumbrian Water / Essex & Suffolk Water
 - LinkedIn – Northumbrian Water Group Northumbrian Water / Essex & Suffolk Water
 - Instagram - Northumbrian Water / Essex & Suffolk Water
- Tag us in your posts on the above
- Use relevant hash tags to join wider conversations - **#branchout #waterenvironment**
- Use an image, infographic or short film and always include an action to encourage engagement for example: ‘Find our more / Watch now / Visit.....’
- Include **#branchout** when communicating the impact of your project on social media.

Sample social media messages on page 8.

Help promoting your news

We want to be able to share your project’s results, impact, and lessons learned in relation to managing and implementing your funding. We will share your social media stories and issue our own social media messages which we would like you to share.

Photography guide

You do not need to hire a professional photographer to capture good photos of your project, staff or beneficiaries. Smartphones and basic cameras can produce excellent photography and there are many online guides available that will help you to produce beautiful, strong images.

Photography Consent forms

You may already have your own consent forms for photography and filming, but we have copies available if you don’t already have one or want to update yours. Please get in touch and we can provide

If you have any queries regarding announcing and promoting your funding, contact the External Communications Team by email on: **externalcommunications@nwl.co.uk** or call 0333 312 4841.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE (always clearly state it is a press release)

Date:

Title: (sum up your overall message in under eight words)

Standfirst: 'XX based in XX, has been awarded a grant from Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water's Branch Out fund supporting improvements to reconnect habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife, building resilience to our region. (Your first sentence should sum up your entire story - ideally in under 25 words.)

Further content ideas:

- Include a sentence on your organisation
- Then a sentence on the project you will implement with the funding and why it is important
- Include a sentence on the impact you will make with the funding / the difference to the community/environment
- Include a quote from your Chief Executive/Project lead which includes some of your key messages
- Direct people to your website for further information on your work (don't forget the link)
- Don't forget to acknowledge the Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water at some point during the release, using a line such as '[This project is funded by Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water through their Branch Out scheme](#) (add link to fund page)'
- Include 'ENDS' at the bottom of your press release
- Include 'For further information or details contact: XX'
- Attach an image (include a caption for the image and any required acknowledgements for the photographer)
- Include a "NOTES TO EDITORS:" (you should include some background details on Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water Branch Out fund) For example:

[Northumbrian Water Limited supplies 2.7 million customers in the Northeast with both water and sewerage services, trading as Northumbrian Water. / Essex & Suffolk Water supplies provides water services to 1.5 million customers in Essex and 300,000 customers in Suffolk and is part of Northumbrian Water Limited.](#)

[Northumbrian Water's/Essex & Suffolk Water's Branch Out fund is available to projects that reconnect habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife, building resilience to our region whilst bringing benefits to water, wildlife and communities.](#)

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING

Initial announcement

“We’re delighted to have received funding from @NorthumbrianH2O’s/@ESWH2O’s Branch Out scheme for our project {Insert name of project} – you can find out more about it here: {add link} #branchout”

“Great news! Our {Insert name of project} is being funded by @NorthumbrianH2O’s/@ESWH2O’s Branch Out scheme to help improve our water environment. Find out more here {add link} #branchout”

Ongoing messaging

“Work continues on our {insert name of project} funded by @NorthumbrianH2O’s/@ESWH2O’s Branch Out scheme #branchout”

“Great example of partnership working with the support of @NorthumbrianH2O’s/@ESWH2O’s Branch Out scheme #branchout”