**The Anglers’ Riverfly Monitoring Initiative**

**Introduction**

Anglers and local community groups are often seen as natural guardians of the river environment, because they are in an ideal position to monitor the health of the watercourses they fish and live near.

The Anglers’ Riverfly Monitoring Initiative (ARMI) has been pioneered by the Riverfly Partnership to provide a simple, standardised monitoring technique which groups can use to detect any severe perturbations in river water quality, and put them in direct communication with their local ecological contact at the Environment Agency (EA) / Scottish Environment Protection Agency - participating areas (SEPA) / National Resources Wales (NRW) / Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Used alongside routine monitoring by the EA / SEPA / NRW / NIEA, this ARMI scheme ensures that water quality is checked more widely, and remedial action is taken at the earliest opportunity if any severe perturbations are detected. This active monitoring also acts as a deterrent to incidental polluters. Successful schemes are underway in catchments across England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, with data centrally captured on the Riverfly Partnership website.

Organisations interested in joining the initiative should have a member who is prepared to act as a local coordinator (to serve as a contact point between the EA / SEPA / NRW / NIEA and the monitoring group) and have members attend an official Riverfly Partnership workshop, run by a tutor who has been accredited by the Riverfly Partnership. The workshop includes presentations and practical demonstrations.

**Training and costs**

The current format for ARMI training is a one-day training workshop, delivered by an individual who has been certificated by the Riverfly Partnership to do so. If available, the local EA area ecology contact usually attends the day too. Up to 12 participants can attend the workshop, with each receiving a participant pack and certificate, the latter on successful completion of the training.

The cost per participant pack (including certificate) is either:

£5.00 plus p&p – the Riverfly Partnership will post printed materials and email additional materials in advance of a workshop, so that packs can be collated locally; or

£15.00 plus p&p – the Riverfly Partnership will collate all materials and send complete packs in advance of a workshop.

The cost of delivering the workshop itself may vary according to tutor availability. If there is a tutor locally attached to an ARMI hub, there is usually either a per participant cost or flat rate (to cover tutor expenses etc). If there isn’t a hub or local tutor in place, there are ‘floating’ tutors who charge for their time and expenses. The Riverfly Partnership’s Ben Fitch can also deliver some workshops, with time covered by core funding but other expenses chargeable: travel (£0.45/mile), accommodation (according to local availability and costs) and subsistence (up to a max of £60/day). As a rough guide for fundraising purposes, a fee of up to £1000 to cover tutor costs and participant packs is suggested, although the actual cost is usually less.

In terms of equipping ARMI volunteers, one Riverfly Partnership kit is recommended per pair of trained monitors and, ideally, kits should be ordered at least three weeks in advance of a training workshop so that one is available between every two participants during training. Thereafter, kits are often issued to monitors at the end of the workshop, ideally after sites have been identified and approved. [NHBS](https://www.nhbs.com/equipment/riverfly-partnership-kit?q=&fR%5Bhide%5D%5B0%5D=false&fR%5Blive%5D%5B0%5D=true&fR%5Btype%5D%5B0%5D=5&hFR%5Bsubjects_equipment.lvl1%5D%5B0%5D=Aquatic%20Survey%20%3E%20Riverfly%20Partnership%20Kit&qtview=210184) are the official RP kit supplier: currently each kit costs £93.00 plus delivery.

**Other considerations**

In addition to these logistics and costs, groups should also consider the following:

* Venue hire
* Refreshments: for participants, coordinator, EA contact and tutor during the workshop
* Lunch: participants are usually asked to provide their own packed lunch, but some groups decide to provide lunch);
* Waders: participants should be asked to bring their own waders if they have them, but some groups secure funding in order to provide waders
* Buoyancy aids: the Riverfly Partnership strongly recommends the use of buoyancy aids by ARMI participants; ultimately it is a decision to be taken by the local group coordinator and individual volunteers. Some groups secure funding in order to provide one for each volunteer trained. Crewsaver 50N buoyancy aids are recommended, these cost somewhere around £50 plus p&p and are available online or locally
* Suitable insurance: the burden of responsibility to provide sufficient insurance cover for a workshop itself resides with the local host (if the host has contacted the Riverfly Partnership to request training). Providing suitable insurance to cover ongoing monitoring activities is also the responsibility of the local host (usually where trained volunteers are officially registered with the host) unless a trained individual elects to act independently, in which case the burden of responsibility rests with the individual.

**Funding**

Funding to establish and support an ARMI group is often secured locally as part of a wider river focused project (such as habitat improvement, fish passage or other initiatives) because ARMI fulfils many project requirements such as monitoring, citizen science and public engagement.

Community groups in search of funding opportunities are encouraged to speak to their local ARMI hub co-ordinators. In the past, some groups have successfully applied to the Awards for All fund (to fund ARMI training and equipment). More recently, some funding has been available through local Catchment Partnerships under the Catchment Based Approach.

**Further information**

For more information, please visit <http://www.riverflies.org/>

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