Independent Water Networks

Non-Technical Summary Draft Drought Plan 2027

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY DROUGHT PLAN 2027

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Who Are We?

Independent Water Networks (IWNL) is overseen by Ofwat, the organisation that regulates water companies in England and Wales. IWNL is approved by Ofwat to supply water to specific developments or sites.

Rather than having its own water sources, IWNL receives treated drinking water from the incumbent water company in the area and then supplies it to customers on those sites.

IWNL currently has 1116 NAV sites located across England; these sites are illustrated in map below.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

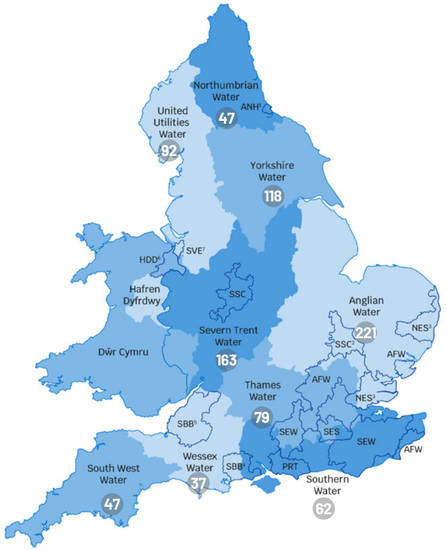
We've updated our Drought Plan, which explains how we will respond if there is a risk of drought.

This leaflet provides a simple overview of that plan and includes tips on how you can help save water. It gives you an idea of what we will do during periods of dry weather and low rainfall.

Our draft Drought Plan 2027 is available from our website at www.iwnl.co.uk

WHO WE CONSULT WITH

We work with regulators and incumbent water companies to make sure our plans follow good practice and that everyone gets clear, consistent information during droughts.



IWNLS NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL SITES IN ENGLAND

AFW – Affinity water	61
ANH1 – Anglian Water Hartlepool	7
NES3 – Northumbrian, Essex and Suffolk Water	26
PRT- Portsmouth Water	27
SBB4 – South West Water, Bristol Water, Bournemouth Water	8
SBB5 - South West Water, Bristol Water, Bournemouth Water	22
SES – Sutton and East Surrey Water	1
SEW – South East Water	80
SSC – South Staffs Water	11
SSC2 – South Staffs Water	7

What is a Drought Plan?

All water companies are legally required to have a Drought Plan. This plan explains how we will continue to supply water to our customers during periods of low rainfall.

Our 2027 Drought Plan updates our previous 2021 plan. It sets out the actions we will take before, during, and after a drought, and explains how we will keep customers and other water companies informed.

HOW WE DEVELOP OUR DROUGHT PLAN

2021 OUR PREVIOUS PLAN WAS PUBLISHED IN 2021.

WE DEVELOPED AN UPDATED PLAN TO REFLECT NEW GUIDANCE AND CHANGES TO HOW WE MANAGE DROUGHTS.

WE WORKED WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND OTHER WATER COMPANIES TO GATHER THEIR VIEWS AND IMPROVE THE PLAN.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE UPDATED PLAN – SPRING/SUMMER 2026.

REVIEW THE FEEDBACK WE RECEIVED AND MAKE FURTHER UPDATES.

A SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO BE PUBLISHED AND PUBLISH A STATEMENT OF RESPONSE.

THE UPDATED PLAN TO BE SUBMITTED TO DEFRA FOR APPROVAL..

PUBLISH THE FINAL DROUGHT PLAN IN SPRING 2027.

KEY INFORMATION ON OUR 2027 DROUGHT PLAN

Why Do We Have a Drought Plan?

We are required to produce a Drought Plan, which explains how we will manage water supplies during long periods of low rainfall. It sets out the actions we will take and when we will take them.

The plan also explains how we will keep our customers informed and how we will work with them to reduce water use during a drought. It includes the points we use to decide when action is needed and how those actions may affect you.

We believe it's important that customers and other stakeholders understand when water supplies are under pressure and when restrictions may be needed. Our Drought Plan helps provide this information and outlines the level of service you can expect. For more detail, you can refer to the full Drought Plan for your area.

How Will a Drought Affect Me?

If a drought is declared in your area, we will contact you with advice on how you can help save water through our water saving campaign.

If the drought becomes more severe, we may introduce temporary restrictions on certain water uses, such as using hosepipes. For example, using a hosepipe to wash a car can use a large amount of water—around the same as two baths in just 10 minutes.

These types of restrictions help conserve water and protect supplies during a drought.

TEMPORARY USE BANS

During drought conditions, we may need to introduce restrictions to help reduce water use. These are known as temporary use bans (TUBs), sometimes called hosepipe bans, and mainly affect how households use water.

These restrictions usually limit activities that use a lot of water, especially when using a hosepipe, such as watering gardens. Our Drought Plan explains what activities may be restricted, how these decisions are made, and any cases where exemptions may apply.

We will let you know in advance if restrictions are likely. This may include updates on our website, notices in local newspapers, and advice on how you can save water.

Any restrictions will be introduced in alignment with the incumbent water company to make sure customers receive clear and consistent information.

WHAT IS A DROUGHT?

Droughts happen when there is very little rainfall over a period of time. When this is combined with higher temperatures, it can put pressure on water supplies and make it harder to meet demand.

Every drought is different in terms of how severe it is, how long it lasts, and where it happens. Because of this, the effects on customers, businesses, and the environment can vary. That's why it's important to have a plan in place to manage and respond to drought conditions.

Water Resource Challenges

One of the main challenges facing water supplies is climate change along with a growing population. Climate change is likely to reduce the amount of water available while population growth increases the demand for it.

Changes in the climate mean we are likely to see less rainfall during the summer, combined with higher temperatures. This can lead to more water being lost through evaporation and less water soaking into the ground to replenish supplies. At the same time, heavier bursts of rainfall may become more common, which can be harder to capture and can carry pollutants into rivers.

Population growth also puts extra pressure on water resources, especially in areas where supplies are already limited such as the south east of England.

Because of these challenges, we need to plan carefully for the future. You can find more details in our Drought Plan 2027 and Water Resource Management Plan 2024 on our website.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

MANY EVERYDAY APPLIANCES USE MORE WATER THAN WE MIGHT REALISE. BY MAKING A FEW SIMPLE CHANGES AT HOME, YOU CAN HELP PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, REDUCE WATER USE, AND LOWER YOUR WATER BILLS.

WATER SAVING TIPS

BATHROOM:

- Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth can save about 6 litres of water every minute.
- A bath uses around 80 litres of water. Filling it just slightly less can save about 5 litres each time.
- Showers make up a large part of water use at home (around a quarter). Cutting your shower by just one minute can save up to 15 litres.

KITCHEN:

- A typical washing machine uses around 50 litres of water per load. Try to run it only when it's full to save water.
- Only boil the amount of water you need in the kettle to save both water and energy.
- Dishwashers use about 15 litres per cycle—running them only when full helps reduce water use.
- Fixing leaks inside your home can make a big difference. Even a dripping tap can waste enough water to fill a bath in a day, so use a qualified plumber to repair it.

GARDEN:

- Water your plants early in the morning or in the evening to reduce water lost through evaporation.
- Hoses and sprinklers can use a lot of water—up to 1,000 litres per hour (more than 12 baths). Using a watering can instead helps save water.
- Installing a water butt is a great way to collect rainwater for your garden and reduce the amount of tap water you use.

Our Drought Triggers

IWNL does not have its own water sources. Instead, we receive treated drinking water from the incumbent water company in each area where we operate.

Because we operate across multiple regions, our drought triggers and actions are aligned with incumbent notifications and thresholds. IWNL only implements actions once the incumbent triggers them.

DROUGHT LEVELS

The different drought levels and actions are set by the Environment Agency and are used by water companies across England.

As IWNL does not own or operate its own water sources, our approach focuses on managing demand (how much water is used), rather than supply. This means our level of service is based on the actions customers can take to reduce water use rather than changes to water availability itself.

DROUGHT ACTIONS

It is important to plan what actions will be taken during a drought and when they will be introduced. As conditions become drier, these actions are gradually increased in stages, with each step following on from the previous one.

DROUGHT CLASSIFICATION LEVEL	ACTION SUMMARY	IWNL'S LEVEL OF SERVICE
1 Developing Drought	Communications campaign, increased leakage control	**1**
	Drought actions with minor environmental impacts	**N/A**
2 Drought	Temporary use bans	**2**
	Drought actions with minor environmental impacts	**N/A**
3 Drought	Moderate environmental impact drought permit and ordinary drought orders	**3**
	All possible actions to avoid emergency drought orders including major environmental impact drought permits and order	**N/A**
4 Severe Drought	This level of drought is managed under IWNL's Emergency Plan.	**4**

SEVERITY OF THE DROUGHT

1 Water efficiency media campaign

2 Temporary use bans

3 Ordinary drought order: Non-essential use bans

4 Extreme drought management actions

Reducing Demand

If we expect drought conditions, we will keep you informed throughout. We will increase our communications so you understand what stage of a drought we are in and provide helpful tips on how you can save water at home.

TEMPORARY USE BANS (TUBS)

If dry conditions continue, we may introduce restrictions to help reduce water use. These are known as temporary use bans (TUBs), sometimes called hosepipe bans.

This will align with the incumbent water company and the Environment Agency. We will work closely together to make sure customers receive clear and consistent information across the area.

These restrictions are designed to help balance water supply and demand and reduce the risk of more severe measures being needed later.

ACTIVITIES THAT ARE RESTRICTED BY A TEMPORARY USE BAN:

- Cleaning a private leisure boat using a hosepipe
- Cleaning a private motor vehicle using a hosepipe
- Filling or maintaining an ornamental fountain
- Cleaning walls, or windows, of domestic premises using a hosepipe
- Cleaning paths or patios using a hosepipe
- Cleaning other artificial outdoor surfaces using a hosepipe
- Drawing water using a hosepipe, for domestic recreational use
- Filling or maintaining a domestic swimming or paddling pool
- Watering a garden using a hosepipe
- Watering plants on domestic or non-commercial premises using a hosepipe
- Filling or maintaining a domestic pond using a hosepipe

Reducing Demand (cont...)

NON-ESSENTIAL USE BAN (NEUB)
If the situation becomes more serious, we may introduce further restrictions that apply to both households and businesses. These are known as Non Essential Use Bans (NEUBs).

To introduce these measures, we must apply for approval from the Environment Secretary through what is called a Drought Order. As part of this process, we need to show that we have already taken steps to encourage reduced water use.

We will keep you informed by placing notices in local newspapers and on our website, which will explain the restrictions and how you can share your views.

ACTIVITIES THAT ARE RESTRICTED BY A NON-ESSENTIAL USE BAN:

- Watering outdoor plants at a commercial premises such as a garden centre
- Filling or maintaining a non-domestic paddling pool or swimming pool
- Filling or maintaining a pond
- Operating a mechanical vehicle washer
- Cleaning any vehicle, boat, aircraft or rolling stock
- Cleaning any commercial premises
- Cleaning a window
- Cleaning industrial equipment (plant)
- Suppressing dust

EXTREME RESTRICTIONS
Only in the most extreme circumstances would we apply for an Emergency Drought Order to introduce more severe restrictions.

This could include:

- Limiting water supply at certain times of the day (rota cuts)
- Asking customers to collect water from standpipes in the street or from mobile tankers at local collection points

These measures would only ever be used as a last resort during a very severe drought.

Communication

We understand how important it is to keep you informed before, during and after a drought. We will use a range of communication channels to keep you updated on the situation and any actions that may be required. Our Drought Plan explains what we will communicate and when at each stage of a drought.

Our communications will:

- Raise awareness of the need to reduce water use.
- Keep you informed about the current situation.
- Explain our plans and how they may affect you.

We will also work closely with the incumbent water company to ensure that customers receive clear and consistent information.

The End of a Drought

We will only return to normal once water supplies have recovered and remained stable for a period of time. As it can take time for water resources to recover, some drought actions may continue even after rainfall has returned to normal levels.

Any decision to lift restrictions will be made in partnership with the incumbent water company to ensure customers receive clear and consistent information.

Once conditions have returned to normal, we will review how the drought was managed and publish a "lessons learnt" report on our website.

Independent Water Networks

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www.iwnl.co.uk