

Drought Plan 2019

Annex 6: Management and communications

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Version 1



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**Southern
Water** 

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Introduction

This annex sets out how Southern Water would manage a drought within our organisation and the steps we will take to communicate with our customers, stakeholders, employees, water industry regulators and other water companies.

Effective management is vital during a drought to ensure timely and efficient steps can be taken to mitigate the impact on customers, safeguard the environment, agree and carry out monitoring and communicate with customers and stakeholders internally and externally.

It is also important to ensure the company is in an informed position to contribute positively to regional and national activities and collaborate with other water companies, regulators and the government. Our plan is designed to deliver the most cost beneficial level of communication and management, to ensure we meet our obligations and customers' expectations, while also ensuring value for money within an overall drought budget.

Communication is critical and this annex includes updates to reflect the lessons learnt during the most recent droughts in the South East in 2005-06, 2011-12 and 2016-18, and the UKWIR document *Managing Through Drought* published in 2014. It has also been updated to reflect the outcome of the River Itchen, River Test and Candover abstraction licence Public Inquiry (the inquiry) in which an agreement was reached between the Environment Agency and Southern Water in the form of a Section 20 Operating Agreement (the s20 agreement) to maintain supplies to customers and protect the Rivers Test and Itchen. The time limited agreement, to allow Southern Water to implement alternative sources of supply, incorporates a timetable of interventions that require management and communication actions be taken earlier than otherwise would normally be needed. Further details are included in this annex.

The Internal Drought Plan (IDP) sets out the responsibilities of each Southern Water directorate, timetables for action, information on water restrictions, Drought Permits and Orders and examples of former droughts. It forms a central point of information for all Southern Water employees and contractors and covers:

- useful information on our water resources and supplies
- how we monitor water levels to determine our drought status
- the actions we would take under different stages of a drought to
 - communicate with our customers and regulators
 - control demand for water
 - increase supplies of water

Although each drought is different and requires individual management, our management and communication actions are designed to reflect each key stage of a drought, which we have broken down into:

- Normal: No Drought
- Stage 1: Impending Drought
- Stage 2: Drought
- Stage 3: Severe Drought (Phase One)
- Stage 4: Severe Drought (Phase Two)
- Emergency Drought

Activities during normal conditions

When supplies are healthy, hydrometric indicators are within their normal ranges, and no drought triggers have been reached, we carry out business as usual activities to make the best use of the stressed supplies in the South East, in line with the promises in our Business Plan 2015-20.

Ongoing communication and engagement with customers, stakeholders and our communities about water use and water resource availability is critical to ensure a common understanding of the situation and support for Drought Plan interventions before a drought develops.

Our business as usual activities include:

- free water efficiency audits and retrofits for customers (targeted at high water use customers struggling to pay their bills and in water-stressed areas)
- talks to school and community groups by our Waterwise speakers
- an over-arching education programme to raise awareness of the link between daily water use and the impact on the local environment
- engagement with stakeholders at annual workshops, panels and in a regular e-newsletter
- general promotion of water efficiency and knowledge of water use, rainfall and water supply through the media, social media and community roadshows
- advice and information online, including access to discounted products
- campaigns with Waterwise, Water UK and WRSE (Water Resources in the South East)
- partnerships with councils, community groups and housing associations to promote water efficiency
- finding and fixing leaks in line with our business goals and raising awareness about how to report a leak
- water efficiency at our sites and office
- information in our in-house magazine Southern Water News and in daily staff announcements for employees and contractors.
- traditional media campaigns
- social media campaigns.

We published a water efficiency strategy document - Saving customers water, energy and money – which sets out our water saving activities for 2015-20. It is included as Appendix A to this document and supports one of our 26 Business Plan promises:



10 per cent reduction (15 litres per person per day) in average water use by 2020 with better advice on saving water, energy and money – this will reduce average water use from 148 litres to 133 litres per person per day.

Our Business Plan for 2020-2025 includes a comprehensive water efficiency programme, focusing on both education and water-saving products and partnerships. This will support a long-term target, Target 100, to reduce personal water use to 100 litres per person per day by 2040.

Western area

Following the conclusion of the inquiry in March 2018, drought actions will be needed more frequently in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (the Western supply area), as new water resources are developed. Following Secretary of State approval, the Environment Agency has now changed the abstraction licences for the River Test surface water and Lower Itchen sources. Applications for a Drought Permit for the River Test surface water abstraction could be made as frequently as once every three to four years on average (ie in 'normal' conditions).

In light of this, the company will focus communication and water efficiency initiatives in this area in 'normal' years to raise awareness of the potential impacts upon customers and the environment of the timetable and interventions within the s20 agreement. This will include a clear explanation of the current water resources situation, the predicted frequency of supply and demand actions (including for example application for a Test surface water Drought Permit) and the actions customers and stakeholders can take to both conserve resources now, and during drought conditions.

This will include activities, such as:

- Providing information online on water efficiency and the water resource situation in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- Sharing leaflets and talking to customers at community events
- Sharing information and water-saving opportunities as part of the school and community talks programme
- Sharing information through regional newspapers, radio, social media sites and community websites
- Offering stakeholder and retailer briefings
- Including information in stakeholder letters and e-bulletins.

In view of the higher frequency of needing to apply for the Test surface water Drought Permit compared with other Drought Permits / Orders, Southern Water has committed, in the s20 agreement, to provide the Environment Agency with updated application documents (including the Environmental Assessment Report (EAR)) on a twice-yearly basis in every September and February. Southern Water has also agreed to share the application documents (including the EAR) with interested stakeholders and arrange to meet with the stakeholders to discuss any comments or concerns in order to ensure the need for the Drought Permit and its impact are understood. The Environment Agency accepts that so long as we have carried out these steps to engage with stakeholders, the absence of stakeholder engagement or consent will not be a barrier to the Environment Agency accepting that a Drought Permit application is 'application ready'.

Up to the time of publication of the final Drought Plan Southern Water has undertaken a mock application exercise for the Test surface water Drought Permit with the Environment Agency

and other stakeholders in line with the s20 agreement commitment as described above. We have also updated the EAR for the Test surface water Drought Permit, shared this with the Environment Agency and stakeholders, and held a further stakeholder meeting to review the learnings from the mock permit exercise.

Drought monitoring

During normal conditions, drought monitoring is carried out by our operations teams and reviewed for action by the strategy teams, through a monthly drought dashboard (see Annex 1 for further details). This includes data from our own monitoring network and from the Environment Agency. It allows us to keep a regular check on our water resources and to share this information with employees, customers and stakeholders to keep everyone informed. The drought dashboard will be updated to incorporate flows on the River Test and Itchen and the specific triggers for drought interventions in Western area as set out in the s20 agreement.

It is the responsibility of the Water Strategy team to use this information to determine when water resources have breached a trigger status and to ensure the subsequent drought actions, are followed – including management and communications.

Management

Introduction

When our triggers show a drought is impending, Southern Water will convene a number of management groups, whose responsibility it is to manage the company's response. This is to ensure actions are taken in good time, so the company is prepared to deal with a drought if conditions deteriorate and we can uphold our promises to customers.

The trigger for the management groups to be set up is the declaration by the Water Resources Policy and Regulation Manager that a water resource zone is in impending drought.

The drought teams will then be set up with the support of the Executive Leadership Team, and their role is to implement the Drought Plan (Internal and External) and authorise budgets and communications with customers, stakeholders, regulators and the wider industry.

In Western area, as mentioned above, drought actions will be needed earlier relative to our drought stages to ensure timely interventions are taken to maintain supplies. As part of the drought dashboard we will closely monitor flows on the River Test as this will trigger the need for us to apply for a River Test surface water Drought Permit, earlier than we would normally have to apply for Drought Permits or Orders. Consequently we will convene a smaller management group and this will likely be needed in 'normal' conditions. This group would then be absorbed into the fuller drought management structures if the situation deteriorates. The further information on the drought management groups below is based on the wider company situation.

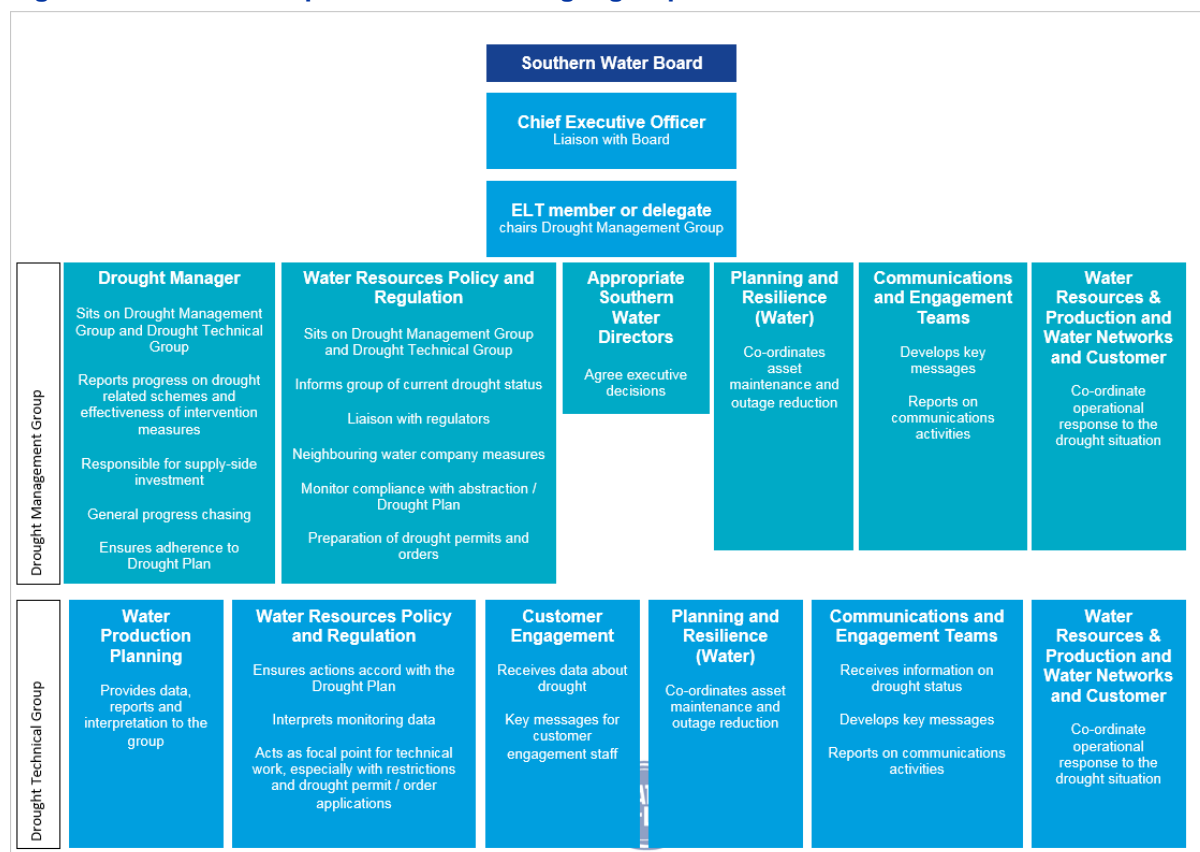
Structure, roles and responsibilities

In the first instance when the impending drought trigger is reached a Drought Technical Group (DTG) will be formed. One of the first actions of the DTG is to update statutory consultees, including the Environment Agency and Natural England, on the current water resource pressures for the company.

If the DTG believes a drought is likely to develop, or has already been triggered, it will call for a Drought Management Group (DMG) to be convened.

The roles and responsibilities of these two groups are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Roles and responsibilities of drought groups



Please note that the titles of different roles are likely to change through re-organisations but the duties / tasks and responsibilities will be covered through the posts put forward.

Drought Technical Group

The DTG is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the drought, as well as monitoring the supply/demand balance and developing and delivering communication. It will:

- collate and analyse technical information (eg actual levels compared to trigger levels) to interpret the developing water resources situation
- follow the Internal Drought Plan
- make recommendations and provide advice to the Drought Management Group
- propose advice on changes to the day-to-day operation of water sources
- produce water situation reports with details of water levels and triggers
- schedule and carry out meetings and calls with statutory consultees
- develop and deliver communication to customers and stakeholders
- develop and deliver communication to employees and partners.

Drought Management Group

The DMG consists of senior managers and directors and reports to the chief executive and the Southern Water Board. It will:

- review reports from the Drought Technical Group
- formulate the development of the company's drought strategy locally and regionally
- meet monthly, or more frequently if the situation warrants more urgent decisions
- make decisions to reduce the impact of a drought on the operation of water sources
- engage with regulators, Water UK and other water companies
- authorise investment to deliver the Drought Plan
- ensure the Internal Drought Plan is followed

Drought Manager and Water Resources Policy and Regulation Manager

A Drought Manager will be appointed at the time the DTG and DMG are formed and will act as project manager for all drought activities, including scheduling, budget, procurement, meetings, audits, reporting and governance. This role is intended to reduce the administrative burden on the key water strategists, allowing them to focus on managing the drought.

Both the Drought Manager and the Water Resources Policy and Regulation Manager sit on both the DTG and DMG and act as the key link and communication channel between the two groups.

Communications Manager

The Head of Communications will take the lead on establishing the roles and responsibilities within the Communication Team, Stakeholder Team, Customer Engagement Team and Water Efficiency Team for drought engagement with customers and stakeholders.

This may include appointing a dedicated Drought Communications Lead to oversee and co-ordinate all activities and sit on the Drought Management Group.

All communication key messages and actions will be authorised by the Drought Management Group as a whole.

Reporting

Minutes of meetings of both groups will be taken to provide an audit trail of the company's key decisions, actions and responses to the drought. From an early stage of an impending drought, regular liaison is required between these two groups, the Environment Agency and where appropriate other water companies.

A summary of the actions the DMG and DTG will undertake for each drought trigger, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each directorate, are outlined in Figure 2 on the next page.

Communications Plan

Southern Water has developed a Drought Communications Plan to make sure it can communicate effectively with customers, stakeholders, regulators and other partners during all stages of a drought.

This plan has been updated since we published our last Drought Plan in 2013, following the drought of 2011-12 and the collaboration of the water industry in a lessons learned exercise and the publication of the UKWIR document *Managing Through Drought*.

The plan is based on an escalation of activities as a drought develops and is designed to be flexible to respond to the individual circumstances of each drought. In addition, it allows for collaboration with regulators, neighbouring water companies and the wider sector to ensure all activities are aligned and supportive. Where possible, communication activities will be delivered in partnership with organisations, such as local authorities, to maximise reach and effectiveness.

This communication plan is particularly important for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area, as it will experience more frequent restrictions and drought actions in the short term. Customer and stakeholder engagement is a vital part of the s20 agreement to raise awareness of the latest water resources situation and interventions that will be required as a result. For Hampshire, in particular, the risk of interventions is much higher than it has been in the past so explaining the reasons for this and what people can do to help will be important.

In relation to the implementation of monitoring, mitigation and compensation measures for the Test, Candover and Itchen Drought Permits and Orders that have been agreed as part of the s20 agreement, partnership work with third parties will be essential. For example the EA will lead the implementation of the majority of mitigation measures for these options, with some specific enhancements for southern damselfly and white clawed crayfish likely to be delivered by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Our customer promise

Central to our communication is the promise we have made to our customers that we will not impose restrictions on water use unless there are at least two dry winters in a row.

We made this promise in our Business Plan for 2015-20.

We also listened to our customers' feedback in our last round of plans and took the lead to increase our resilience to drought events. Most water companies plan for droughts based on their experiences of the worst droughts in the past. The key ones were in 1901-03, 1921 and 1976.

We have pioneered a new way of planning, which looks at the weather patterns which caused these droughts and considered 2,000 alternatives, some of which result in more severe droughts than those we have experienced. By building these calculations into our planning we are ensuring our water supply network is more resilient.

The messages we share with our customers and stakeholders ensure they are aware that Southern Water has been thorough in its drought planning and that restrictions are only introduced in a genuine situation of need.

Drought phases

Our Communications Plan is based on a phased approach working alongside the Drought Plan, with activities increasing as a drought worsens. It is also closely linked to regional and national activities with other water companies, with a view to sharing information and developing a common approach to managing resources and engaging with customers.

The triggers for communication actions are aligned with the drought stages we follow for all drought actions:

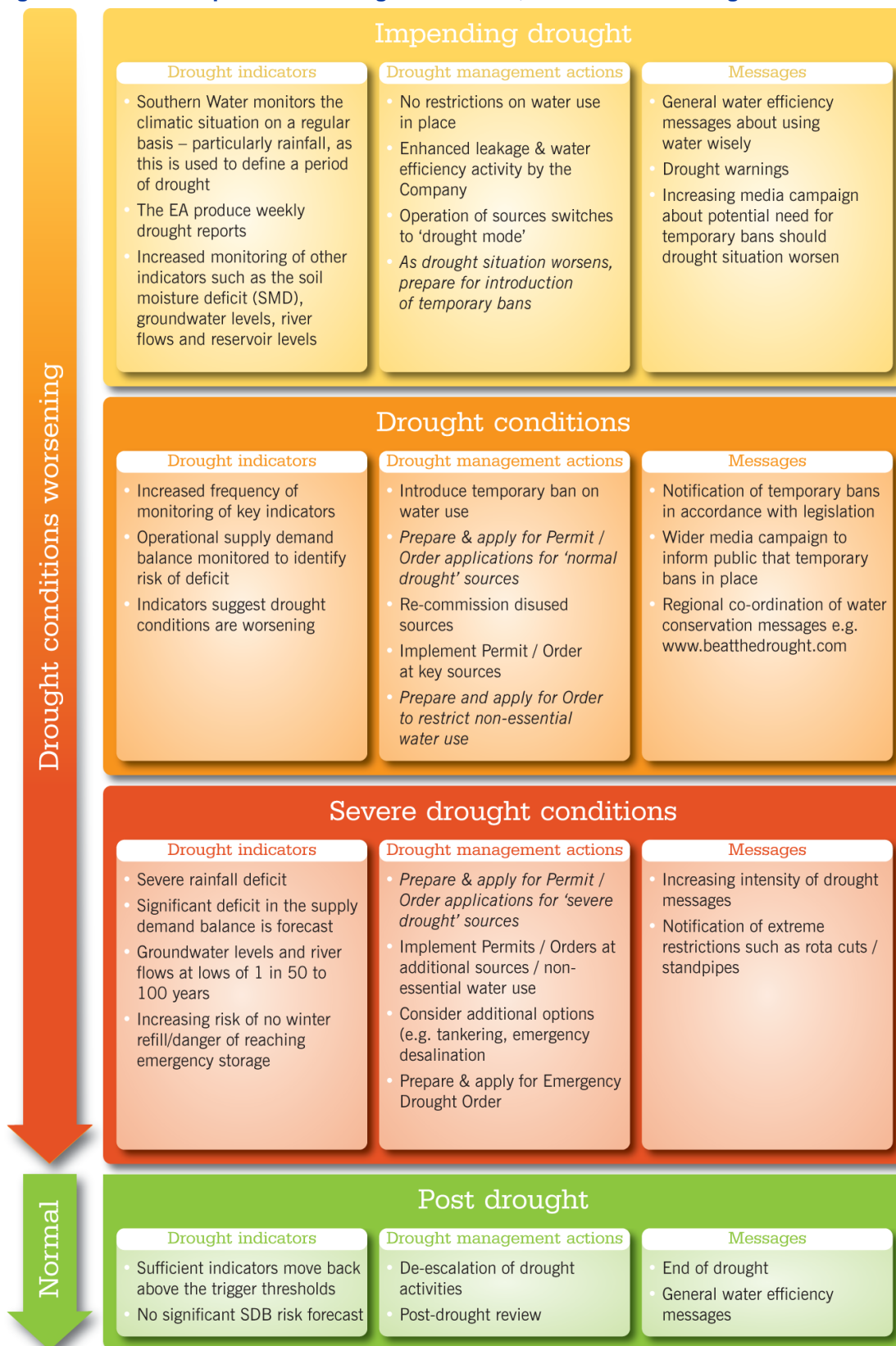
- Normal: No Drought
- Stage 1: Impending Drought
- Stage 2: Drought
- Stage 3: Severe Drought (Phase One)
- Stage 4: Severe Drought (Phase Two)
- Emergency Drought

Our Internal Drought Plan outlines the communication and water efficiency activity we will undertake during each of these phases, and how it will be delivered and monitored.

During each phase, the communication team will be preparing material, and identifying partnership opportunities and activities in readiness for the next phase, should the drought increase in severity.

Figure 3, on the next page, illustrates how the communication activities are escalated in relation to the drought conditions and actions.

Figure 3: Relationship between drought indicators, actions and messages



Outline objectives of our communications plan

The Communications Plan has several key objectives, which are to:

- raise public awareness and provide regular updates on the water resources situation
- provide a clear explanation of why there is a drought
- inform customers and stakeholders about the work we are doing to help the situation, such as increasing our work to find and repair leaks, water efficiency, new resources
- encourage household customers to save water at home and in the garden and to raise awareness of our on-going water efficiency campaigns
- announce and raise awareness of any water restrictions
- give customers and stakeholders a clear explanation of the restrictions and the exceptions
- provide clear information about the relationship between rain, water resources, the environment and water use
- work with other water companies, the Environment Agency and other organisations to raise the profile of the drought
- continue to work with water companies with whom we have bulk supply contracts to ensure bulk supply contracts are updated and both parties are clear on contractual arrangements during drought conditions
- continue to work with water companies to ensure application readiness of Drought Permit and Orders where there is a need for joint working to undertake environmental assessments, monitoring and mitigation.
- encourage commercial customers to become more water efficient
- keep stakeholders informed about the situation and work collaboratively
- raise awareness of our long-term planning and innovation.

Key audiences

Before, during and after a drought we will communicate with everyone in our region who is likely to be impacted by a shortage of water resources and restrictions, in a way which is most useful to them. The main audiences we will target are:

- customers – domestic and business
- retail partners for business customers, schools etc
- environmental groups – World Wildlife Fund (WWF), RSPB, fisheries, wildlife groups
- representative bodies – Confederation of British Industry (CBI), National Farmers Union (NFU), Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), Chamber of Commerce, British Waterways
- sports and interest groups – angling, canoe, football, cricket, bowling
- MPs, ministers, council CEOs
- local councils – all tiers
- regulators – Ofwat, Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE), DWI
- public services – fire, police, health authorities
- consumer groups – CC Water and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- neighbouring water companies
- WRSE, Water UK, Waterwise
- employees and contractors
- Southern Water's Customer Advisory Panel
- media – print, radio, broadcast and online
- local resilience forums.

Our activities are designed to maximise the use of existing communication channels, such as the company's website, social media channels, call centre, bills, workshops and events and also expand to other channels, such as advertising on radio and/or television.

Key messages

The key messages we will communicate during a drought will be tailored to the situation. We will ensure they are clear, consistent and aligned where appropriate with other water companies. Some messages may be relevant only to our region. The messages will be communicated in a consistent manner, utilising the channels most appropriate to each audience.

The key messages will include:

- what is a drought
- why has this happened
- the geographical area the drought status covers
- information on rain and the impact on reservoirs and groundwater supplies
- what action we are taking to supply and save water
- leakage – what we are doing and reporting leaks
- what homes and businesses can do to help save water
- what restrictions are in place, what they cover and why
- who and what is exempt from restrictions
- securing new water and protecting the environment
- thanking customers for their support
- where and how to find more information
- when a drought is over.

These messages will be consistently conveyed throughout all our communications, with the level of detail and frequency adapted for the audiences.

In the Western area to align with the s20 agreement there will be a need to tailor some of the key messages to ensure our customers understand the situation and need for early drought interventions. More specific messages will include:

- Why the water supply situation in Hampshire is different to what it has been in the past
- How customers can help reduce demand to and reduce the risk of formal water use restrictions
- What the company is doing to reduce leakage and help customers save water
- Why restrictions might need to be implemented when they have not been needed in Hampshire since 1976.
- Why the company needs to apply for a Drought Permit on the River Test when this has not been needed before.
- How the River Test and Itchen will benefit from the additional protection that the licence changes will provide.
- How the mitigation measures which are being implemented will minimise the impact of the Test Drought Permit on the environment.
- Why there is a close link between the water resource availability in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Drought communication actions

As described earlier, the Communications Plan will take a phased approach, following the same key drought stages as our operational and management actions:

- Normal: No Drought
- Stage 1: Impending Drought
- Stage 2: Drought
- Stage 3: Severe Drought (Phase One)
- Stage 4: Severe Drought (Phase Two)
- Emergency drought

The company has delivery plans and material prepared and used in previous impending drought and drought situations, which is readily available to be quickly updated, refreshed and utilised for communication.

As each drought is different and cannot be fully prepared for in advance, these templates mean that material can be updated, approved and begin to be circulated within a few weeks, and in some cases one or two days, for example social media and website tools.

This includes:

News releases

Social media posts

Graphics

Stakeholder letter / e-newsletter

Website pages

Interactive online tool to describe the stages of drought and the restrictions/exemptions allowed during each stage

Briefing notes for customer services

Articles for staff magazines, emails and daily announcements

PowerPoint packs for internal and external presentations.

General films.

While all employees and contractors communicate regularly with customers, stakeholders, regulators and other organisations, there are a number of departments in Southern Water who will take the lead on actions during a drought. These include:

- Communications (media, customers and employees)
- Customer Engagement (customers – home)
- Strategy (regulators and stakeholders)
- Executive Team (government and Water UK).

Normal: No drought

Communication and engagement with customers, stakeholders and our communities about water use, water supply, rain and water levels are critical to developing a better understanding before a drought develops.

As part of its on-going media activities the Communications Team promotes water efficiency and shares general information on water supply, rain, water sources, leakage and planning.

We have outlined the water efficiency activities earlier on page 5, and they are shared in more detail in our Water Efficiency Strategy (Appendix A to this document).

Our Internal Drought Plan describes the communication actions we would take at this stage, and how we would deliver them:

Internal Drought Plan – Communication and engagement (Normal)

Communication and engagement with customers, stakeholders and our communities about water use, water supply, rainfall and water levels are critical to developing a better understanding before a drought develops.

The Communications Team is responsible for developing and providing information to support delivery of the Water Efficiency Plan and general information on our water supply.

This information includes:

- *Regular updates on rainfall, levels of water sources and leakage*
 - *Information on the current drought status, the Drought Plan and restrictions*
 - *Water efficiency advice and access to discounted products*
 - *Information on the water cycle and the supply process*
 - *Key stage education programmes for primary and secondary schools*
- *Information on leakage and development of new water resources*
 - *Promotion of campaigns with Waterwise, Water UK and Water Resources in the South East (WRSE).*

A range of tools are used to communicate this information, including:

- *Website*
- *Social media – Facebook and Twitter*
- *Video*
- *News releases*
- *Stakeholder newsletters*
- *Campaigns in the community Partnerships with councils and community organisations*
- *Waterwise talks for schools and community groups*
- *Southern Water News and the intranet for staff.*

As described earlier, particular focus will be put on the Hampshire and Isle of Wight supply areas to highlight the expected increase frequency in drought actions in the short term.

In relation to the Test Drought Permit and Drought Order, the Candover Augmentation Scheme Drought Order and the Lower Itchen sources Drought Order, the s20 agreement sets out specific engagement activities with the Environment Agency and Natural England which are required in 'normal' water resource conditions as well as in a situation of impending drought. In particular this includes regular 6-month reviews of the Test Drought Permit application documents. Furthermore we will work with the Environment Agency, Natural England and other stakeholders in Hampshire and Isle of Wight to discuss potential restrictions under Temporary Use Bans and Non-Essential Use Ban Drought Orders, and supply-side applications under Drought Permits and Orders.

We will also initiate a stakeholder engagement plan ahead of applications for Drought Permits and Drought Orders in the Western area, where customers and businesses have not experienced restrictions since 1976 and where they are more likely to experience them in the short term.

Stage 1: Impending drought

When a water resource indicator breaches its impending drought trigger, an impending drought is declared in the affected water resource zone(s) and this is communicated around the company.

At this stage, the Drought Technical Group would be set up, including representatives from Communications and Customer Engagement and these departments would also set up their own internal drought groups and leads.

The messages at this stage will focus on water resource levels and rainfall, leakage and water efficiency. The emphasis will be on encouraging customers to be more water efficient and informing customers about the actions Southern Water is taking eg increasing its efforts to find and repair leaks, develop new resources and promote water efficiency. The messages will be tailored to the time of year the impending drought is triggered.

These key messages and communication material will have been developed in advance of the trigger for an impending drought, as monitoring reveals the benchmark approaching. This will allow some communication activities and water efficiency promotion to begin within a week of an Impending Drought being declared, such as media and social media activity and online information. The production of bespoke drought material such as leaflets and films could take up to a month to publish.

In the Western area to support implementation of the s20 agreement key messages and communication materials are needed before the impending drought trigger is reached as described previously. There will be a need for increased communications generally in Western area to raise awareness of the implications of the s20 agreement and what this means for customers. Communications will need to escalate further during dry weather (but still in 'normal' conditions) when the risk of needing to apply for the Test surface water Drought Permit and implement formal water use restrictions increases.

At this stage we would:

General

- set up Communications and Customer Engagement drought teams and organise weekly meetings
- set up evaluation and monitoring mechanisms and agree the extent and approach to monitoring, potentially with other water companies also in a similar drought status
- agree high-level messages with the Executive Leadership Team
- liaise with Water UK, WRSE and neighbouring water companies on joint messaging and campaigns
- liaise with neighbouring water companies to ensure there are proactive discussions around the availability of shared resources and bulk supplies for mutual benefit
- prepare Q&A for customer-facing employees and share these on the central call centre platform
- engage with retail partners to agree a communication strategy for business customers
- plan for additional resources should the drought develop.

Media and digital

- engage with the media on early drought messages and water efficiency eg provide photographs of low reservoirs, rainfall figures, and offer employees for interview
- start time-lapse photography at reservoirs
- promote water efficiency, leakage and early drought messages through Southern Water's social media channels
- prepare the Southern Water website for the possible introduction of restrictions eg an interactive restrictions tool to help customers find out what they can and cannot use water for
- increase the profile of water efficiency and water resource information on the Southern Water website, including advice and discounted offers for water saving
- cost and develop an outline plan for an advertising campaign, targeting impending drought zones.

Stakeholder

- inform stakeholders through the company's regulator e-newsletter and offer briefings
- add early drought messages to community and school talks
- update regulators, MPs, ministers, council CEOs and CC Water on impending drought status through one-to-one briefings
- engage with key partners to consider joint campaigns eg HTA, NFU.

Internal

- inform employees of impending drought through company magazine, staff announcements and monthly team meetings
- appoint drought champions within teams to act as main channel for information.

Water efficiency

- focus water efficiency audits and campaigns in impending drought zones
- promote water efficiency at community events and roadshows

- promote water efficiency through business as usual activities, eg on bills and on the website.

Water-saving messages

At this stage, we would encourage customers to adopt water-saving practices, such as:

- Turning off taps in kitchen and the bathroom – when brushing teeth, washing vegetables etc – and installing tap aerators
- Taking shorter showers
- Ensuring dishwashers and washing machines are full before switching them on
- Checking for leaky loos – supported by information on how to do this
- Choosing water efficient versions if replacing dishwashers, washing machines, taps and toilets
- Installing and using water butts to capture rain for garden watering
- Using mulch and water-retaining gel in pots and baskets
- Choosing plants and vegetables which are more resilient to droughts
- Cutting lawns longer and not watering them if they go brown

We would promote our offers of free water-saving visits and audits in homes and the availability of free products such as save-a-flush bags and discounted water butts.

The channels we would use to communicate with our customers and stakeholders include:

- Media – editorial (newspapers (print and digital) radio and TV and paid for advertising)
- Social media – Twitter, Facebook and Instagram
- Website – a dedicated drought section with links to business-as-usual pages on water efficiency, water resource levels, leakage and how to get in touch
- Emails and e-newsletters (where data protection allows)
- Community events and public stands (eg shopping centres)
- Partner websites and communication channels eg local authorities, community newsletters, environmental groups
- Community and school talks
- One-to-one briefings and group presentations
- Internal channels for staff – Southern Water News, intranet, emails, and briefings in weekly and monthly team meetings.

Monitoring

At the onset of our drought communications we would establish a monitoring programme, as an extension of our business-as-usual monitoring. This could include:

- Register and analysis of customer feedback (as per business as usual)
- Register and analysis of stakeholder feedback (as per business as usual)
- Website metrics – including dedicated drought pages (as per business as usual)
- Social media metrics – with a focus on drought and water efficiency messaging (as per business as usual)

- Bespoke customer research on drought awareness and willingness to support water-saving activities (commissioned through a research agency and measuring differences in geographical areas and segmentation)
- Monitoring of take-up of free/discounted products and water audits
- Monitoring of any changes in water use in areas where the communication and water efficiency measures are targeted (through business as usual reporting channels).

Stage 2: Drought

If water resource indicators breach the drought trigger status, the first step is to declare a drought in the affected water resource zone(s) and communicate this internally to employees.

During a drought, the company will need to take actions which impact on customers, the environment and neighbouring water companies, so communication is essential both internally and externally.

At this stage we would carry out the actions below, having already prepared or launched the majority of the necessary communication tools and channels during the impending drought stage. The majority of the actions can be initiated within a month of a drought trigger.

In the Western area to support implementation of the s20 agreement the actions below are needed before the drought trigger is reached as described previously. Furthermore due to the agreed sequencing of actions in the s20 agreement, the notification, publication and public consultation requirements of the Test Drought Permit will come before other drought actions including TUBs.

General

- update regulators, Water UK and neighbouring water companies on drought status
- consider writing to / emailing / texting customers to inform them of the drought and restrictions
- contact vulnerable customers on the Southern Water register to keep them informed, manage their concerns and ensure customers who require a constant supply of water for medical conditions are prioritised
- liaise with retail partners with regards hospitals, nursing and care homes
- distribute an information leaflet / postcard on drought and restrictions at community events and place them in libraries and other public venues
- update Q&As on drought and restrictions for all customer-facing employees and make sure they are easily available
- agree approach on discretionary concessionary exceptions and ensure this is circulated clearly to employees
- ensure guidance on any restrictions is clear and consistent across all channels
- update community and school talks with drought and restriction information
- engage with retail partners on messaging and restrictions for business customers
- increase the number of employees available to support customers with drought queries and use all channels available – telephone, email, live web chat, text
- provide information about drought and restrictions with all customer-facing material and contact eg tests at customers taps, leakage teams, incidents, customer forums
- prepare messages and communication plan for a third dry winter

- ensure the Customer Advisory Panel is briefed on communication plans and activities and seek their advice
- review staffing levels to support increasing levels of customer, media and stakeholder contact and engage support where required.

Media and digital

- extend the media campaign to declare the drought and escalate to national media – organise press visits to reservoirs and provide media spokespeople for interview, pre-record radio clips for distribution, downloadable photos and fact sheets
- brief ‘citizen journalists / bloggers’ to help disseminate helpful information
- use short video clips to promote drought messages online
- extend a dedicated drought section on the Southern Water website and promote drought and water resources information
- promote the restrictions information tool on the Southern Water website
- add a link to the website for customers to sign up for drought updates
- continue to promote drought information through social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- continue to promote water efficiency and leak alerts through media and digital channels
- engage partners to promote drought information online and through social media
- if TUBs are introduced, place statutory public notices in the London Gazette and regional newspapers in the affected zone, giving at least seven days’ notice, and raise awareness generally
- if Drought Permit or Drought Orders are sought, place statutory public notices in the London Gazette and regional newspapers and raise awareness generally
- launch advertising campaign to raise awareness – eg newspapers, radio, cinema, council publications, libraries, Facebook, websites, ferries.

Stakeholder

- develop a drought briefing pack for employees
- produce exhibition boards to support drought briefing events
- work with Water UK and neighbouring water companies on joint campaigns eg advertising, joint website, stakeholder briefings, government receptions
- continue updates to stakeholders through letters / e-newsletters and offer one-to-one briefings and workshops
- organise presentations for interested stakeholders
- engage with trade organisations such as the Horticultural Trades Association where business customers are likely to be impacted by restrictions
- engage partners such as Waterwise, WWF and the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (WWT) to raise awareness of pressure on water resources and the environment
- liaise with fire service over any restrictions
- weekly data exchange with Environment Agency on resource levels
- initiate a stakeholder engagement plan ahead of applications for Drought Permits and Drought Orders. This can include an e-newsletter / letter to the company’s stakeholder database for the region, with an offer of one-to-one and group briefings ahead of applications being submitted.
- ahead of all Drought Permit and Drought Order applications we would liaise with our regulators, in particular the Environment Agency and Natural England, to review the monitoring, mitigation and compensation programmes, and share drafts of application documents (see Annex 4 and 5 for further details).

Internal

- update staff through the company magazine Southern Water News, online staff announcements and emails, in monthly team briefings and through posters
- engage drought champions to support communications with customers and employees
- ensure all drought messages and material is readily available for employees and contractors eg leaflets and cards for vans
- share key drought messages through CEO email / blog
- promote drought messages on company vehicles.

Water efficiency

- increase water efficiency campaign activities - presence in shopping centres, gardens centres, summer events, mascots to attend community events
- focus water efficiency campaigns and audit programmes in drought-hit zones
- increase giveaway products eg shower timers, save-a-flush bags, shower heads.

Water-saving messages

- At this stage the water-saving messages will focus on the restrictions imposed under TUBs and clearly communicating to customers what is allowed, what is prohibited and what exemptions are allowed and for who. (These restrictions and exemptions are clearly set out in Annex 3)
- In addition, we would continue with our messages around general water-saving behaviour in homes and gardens, supported by targeted audits, communication and free and discounted water-saving products.
- The messages will re-iterate why water-saving is important, what the company is doing for its part, and the difference that everyone can make to support the environment.
- The communication channels and monitoring will continue as described above in the impending drought section, and during a drought stage consideration will also be given to preparing messages and material should the drought worsen.

Stage 3: Severe drought (Phase one)

If a drought escalates and reaches severe drought status, it is likely that further restrictions will be required – Non-Essential Use Bans – which will have an impact on businesses and organisations in the region. In addition, the environment is likely to be under further pressure as water resources reduce and the company may be applying for Drought Permits and Orders to abstract more water, introduce new sources or request new licences.

Co-ordination with neighbouring water companies, Water UK, regulators and the government becomes more critical as a drought worsens and impacts further on households and the economy.

The communication actions we would take in a severe drought are cumulative to those taken in stages 1 and 2, and include:

General

- update customers by letters, email, text and through e-newsletter

- engage with retail partners on introduction of Non-Essential Use Bans
- update Q&A and briefing notes for employees and circulate
- update drought champions on escalating restrictions
- initiate a dedicated Customer Engagement team to support customers affected by Non-Essential Use Bans.
- maintain contact with vulnerable customers and appoint dedicated employees.

Media and digital

- extend and continue the media campaign, with updates on resources and rainfall
- extend and continue the advertising campaign – work with Water UK
- hold a press conference, face-to-face editor briefings
- provide publicity, literature and legal notices for Non-Essential Use Ban restrictions
- provide information for a public inquiry if required for Drought Orders
- increase frequency of updates on social media
- launch an app with information on restrictions
- publish updated films and radio clips for media and digital channels
- update the drought section on the website with latest restrictions
- increase work with partners to promote the activities
- continue to promote the actions Southern Water is taking to tackle the drought
- promote blogs by Southern Water and partner organisations.

Stakeholder

- update stakeholders through bespoke e-newsletters, letters and briefings
- offer invitations to breakfast briefings
- explore further joint working with local authorities
- increase joint activity with other water companies and regulators
- use partners' (Environment Agency, WWF, Water UK, Waterwise) information tools to widen communication channels and promote joint statements
- targeted engagement with business and trade organisations and bodies.
- In the Western area communications with regulatory stakeholders will include the ecological considerations that will then influence the choice of drought actions taken.

Internal

- continue to update staff through internal channels
- increase recruitment of drought champions to support customers.

Water efficiency

- expand the water efficiency campaign and promotions
- work with retailers on specific campaigns to support business customers impacted by non-essential use bans
- work with schools and sports clubs to explore alternative approaches to water use.

Water-saving messages

- At this stage the water-saving messages will focus on the restrictions imposed under Essential Use Bans and TUBs and clearly communicating to customers what is allowed, what is prohibited and what exemptions are allowed and for who. (These restrictions and exemptions are clearly set out in Annex 3).

- In addition, we would continue with our message around general water-saving behaviour in homes and gardens, supported by targeted audits, communication and free and discounted water-saving products.
- The messages will re-iterate why water-saving is required, what the company is doing for its part, and the difference that everyone can make to support the environment.
- The communication channels and monitoring will continue as described above in the Impending Drought section, and during a Drought stage, consideration will also be given to preparing messages and material should the drought worsen even further.

Stage 4: Severe drought (Phase two)

As a severe drought intensifies, the level of restrictions is likely to increase, therefore all activities outlined above will be continued and revisited to update all partners, communication channels and messages. We would:

- continue high-profile media and advertising campaign
- extend range and reach of advertising – television and online
- update Q&A, briefing notes and key messages and circulate internally
- update all media, customer, partner and digital channels with new developments
- continue close liaison with stakeholders - in particular business groups and forums who are affected by the new level of restrictions
- update publicity and literature for non-essential restrictions and ensure only latest information is being communicated to customers
- increase drought champions to support customers, in particular vulnerable groups and businesses
- update employees and contractors through existing channels
- liaise with regulators, ministers, Water UK and water companies to plan for continued drought.

Emergency drought

The likelihood of an emergency drought occurring in the Southern Water region is extremely remote, due to the company's new approach to planning for a wider range of more extreme droughts. Currently the risk stands at 1 in every 500 years on average although this will vary depending on the availability of drought intervention measures in each water resources zone.

However, should a drought become an extreme event, we might need to consider working with the government to apply for an Emergency Drought Order.

Emergency Drought Orders allow water companies to restrict supplies to customers through rota cuts and/or the introduction of standpipes, and they require authorisation from the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Should it be necessary to apply for such an order, all the communication steps above would continue and be escalated, and Southern Water would liaise closely with Water UK and the government on communication activities. If such a situation were to be reached, communication activities would be directed on a national level.

An Emergency Drought Order would necessitate a minimum of 72 hours warning to the local fire authority.

Southern Water also has a statutory responsibility under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which would likely apply in an emergency drought situation for civil protection purposes. As a utility company we are a 'Category 2' responder under the Act and as such we would cooperate and share information as needed with 'Category 1' and other 'Category 2' responders. The framework for this is through the relevant Local Resilience Forums which the company already engages with to ensure it is prepared for such eventualities.

End of a drought

Communicating the end of a drought, when it 'breaks', is just as important as the beginning of a drought. As water resource levels return to normal, we would:

- continue with regular updates to the media and customers and thank them for their support
- update Q&As, website and social media channels
- clearly announce lifting of restrictions through all channels outlined above
- update retail partners on lifting of restrictions and customer messages
- update water resource and rainfall information online
- gather feedback from customers, stakeholders and partners
- evaluate communication channels and messages and undertake customer research
- continue water efficiency promotions
- continue to promote the work we are doing in the long term and the nature of the South East as a water-stressed region
- update employees through internal communication channels
- carry out an internal review of communications, share lessons learnt with Water UK and other water companies and update the Internal Drought Plan.

Further information on the de-escalation and ending of a drought event is available in Annex 7 (Post Drought Actions).

Key media in the Southern Water region

Regional newspapers

Andover Advertiser
Basingstoke Gazette
Battle Observer
Bexhill on sea Observer
Bognor Guardian
Bognor Observer
Brighton & Hove Leader
Canterbury Times
Chichester Observer
Crawley News
Crawley Observer
Dover Express
Dover Mercury
East Grinstead Courier
East Grinstead Observer
East Kent Gazette
Eastbourne Gazette
Eastbourne Herald
Faversham News
Faversham Times
Folkestone Herald
Gravesend Messenger
Hampshire Chronicle
Hastings & St Leonards Observer
Herne Bay Gazette
Herne Bay Times
Isle of Thanet Gazette
Isle of Wight County Times
Isle of Wight Gazette
Kent & Sussex Courier
Kentish Express
Kent Messenger
Kent on Sunday
Littlehampton Gazette
Medway News
Medway Standard
Mid Sussex Leader
Mid Sussex Times
Midhurst Observer
Romsey Advertiser
Rye Observer
Shoreham Herald
Southern Daily Echo
Southampton Advertiser
Sussex Express
Thanet Times

The Argus
The News (Portsmouth)
West Sussex County Times
West Sussex Gazette
Worthing Advertiser
Worthing Herald

Radio stations

BBC Radio Kent
BBC Radio Solent
BBC Sussex
Arrow FM
Breeze 107
Capital FM South
Coast 106
Express FM
Heart FM
IOW Radio
Jack FM (South Coast)
Juice Brighton
KM FM
Original 106
Sovereign FM
Spire FM
Spirit FM
More FM
Wave 105FM

TV stations

BBC South
ITV Meridian
BBC South East
ITV Meridian South East

Websites

BBC for Sussex, Kent and Hampshire
Websites of local and regional newspapers and radio
Community and parish council websites.

Appendix A: Southern Water's Water Efficiency Strategy

Appendix B: Examples of water-saving and drought messages in the early stages of drought (impending drought and drought)

1. Stakeholder newsletter



Water resources update

Southern Water supplies fresh, high-quality drinking water to more than 2 million people across parts of Kent, Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Rainfall levels across the South East over the autumn and winter of 2016–17 were lower than normal. Met Office figures show the region received only 77% of average rainfall. December in particular was very dry with just over a third of the rainfall we would expect to see during the month.

A wet January and February helped considerably, with levels of the underground sources – which produce 70% of the water we supply – increasing

steadily. However, some remain below average for the time of year and further recharge now we've entered spring will be limited.

River levels also increased, allowing us to boost levels in our storage reservoirs by pumping water into them. At the beginning of April three of our reservoirs – Powdermill and Darwell near Hastings and Weirwood near East Grinstead were all full. Bewl Water, our largest reservoir on the Kent/East Sussex border reached just below 80%.

Despite the dry winter, we don't believe we will need to take measures such as introducing Temporary Use Bans (TUBS), previously known as hosepipe bans, in our water supply areas* this spring and summer.

We'll be continuing to monitor the situation closely and over the summer, when we typically see demand for water

increase, we'll be reminding our customers about how they can help by using water wisely.

Water is a precious resource and it's important that we all do what we can to reduce wastage, whatever the weather. Our teams are working round the clock to detect and repair leaks on our network and ensuring that we operate our water sources efficiently, including sharing supplies with our neighbouring companies.

The actions we're taking now will also put us in the best possible position, should we experience a second dry winter in 2017–18. A dry winter is officially defined as one where there's less than 85% of average rainfall between October and March. You can find out more about the steps we could take as the situation develops at southernwater.co.uk/water-resources-plan.

Our area of operation

The area in which we supply water and treat wastewater covers a total of around 10,530km² and extends from East Kent in the east, through parts of Sussex, to Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in the west.

The map below shows our area of operation for water supply and wastewater treatment, as well as the areas other water companies serve.

* You can check if you're in our water supply area by entering your postcode in the 'In your area' feature at southernwater.co.uk/area-of-operation

- Key:**
- Water supply and wastewater treatment areas
 - Wastewater treatment areas only
 - Water supply only areas
 - ✕ Reservoirs

How to contact other water companies:

- Affinity Water – South East Region:** affinitywater.co.uk
- Portsmouth Water:** portsmouthwater.co.uk
- South East Water:** southeastwater.co.uk
- Sutton and East Surrey Water:** waterplc.com
- Thames Water:** thameswater.co.uk



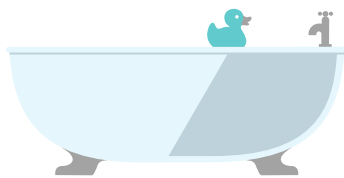
2. Newspaper adverts

Save water, energy and money AND help the environment

Saving water could also bring down your energy bills.

The South East of England is designated as a water-stressed area, so using water wisely also helps protect water resources.

It's really important this summer because we had more dry weather than normal over the autumn and winter. This is when our water sources are usually refilled by rainfall.



Did you know?

Around 25% of gas and electricity used in the average home goes on heating water for washing and drinking.

FREE water-saving home visits

There's a wide range of practical tips, video tutorials, product discounts and other information on how to save water at home and in your garden at:

southernwater.co.uk/howtosave



Or you could book a FREE home visit* from one of our engineers, who can install water and energy-saving products, like showerheads and tap aerators. They'll also be able to tell you how else you can save water in your home.

**Terms and conditions apply*

Our work

We've already increased our focus on fixing leaks across our 13,700km network of water mains



We need to save water, whatever the weather

Despite some wet spells this summer, our water sources are still at below average levels. This is because the autumn and winter were drier than normal. Our region only received 77% of its typical rainfall during these months, according to official figures.

At the moment, we don't believe that we'll need to take any special measures in our water supply areas this year, such as introducing temporary restrictions on water use – you may know these as 'hose-pipe bans'.

Water is a precious resource and it's important we all do what we can to save as much of it as possible. For example, our teams work round the clock to detect and repair leaks on our network of water mains.

We're also providing you with lots of advice and support on how you can help by making small adjustments to your daily routine to use less water.

southernwater.co.uk/howtosave

Top tips for saving water, energy and money



There's lots of ways to save water, every day.

- Only wash full loads in your washing machine or dishwasher
- Use a bucket and sponge to wash your car, rather than a hose-pipe
- Have a four-minute shower, instead of a bath
- Turn the tap off when brushing your teeth
- Install a water butt to collect rainwater for watering your garden (see our website for discounted products)



3. Customer flyer – water efficiency



4. Community notice

Save water, energy and money



The winter of 2016–17 was drier than average which means the water sources we draw from are at a lower level than normal.

As we head into spring and summer and demand for water increases, it's important that we all use water as wisely as possible.

- Only wash full loads in your washing machine or dishwasher
- Use a bucket and sponge to wash your car
- Have a four-minute shower, instead of a bath
- Turn the tap off when brushing your teeth
- Install a water butt to collect rainwater for watering your garden (see our website for discounted products)
- Water your garden early in the morning or in the evening, when it's cooler

To learn more, go to southernwater.co.uk/savingtips

For our part, we've already increased our focus on fixing **leaks** across our 13,700km network of water mains.

