

Draft Drought Plan 2027

Annex 6: Management and communications

May 2026



from
**Southern
Water** 

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Abbreviations

CAB	Citizen Advice Bureau
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CCW	Consumer Council for Water
DSG	Drought Steering Group
DWG	Drought Working Group
EA	Environment Agency
HTA	Horticultural Trades Association
NAV	New Appointments and Variations
NE	Natural England
NFU	National Farmers Union
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RWG	Retail Wholesalers Group
SWS	Southern Water
UKWIR	United Kingdom Water Industry Research
WW	Waterwise
WRSE	Water Resources South East
WRZ	Water Resource Zone
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
WWT	Wildfowl and Wetland Trust

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This Annex is incomplete and the table below describes progress, along with work still to be completed.

Annex 6: Management and communications	Description
Annex % Complete	95%
Work Completed	<p>The Annex is complete in its current draft.</p> <p><i>This Annex is in draft form only. As indicated below, the content remains subject to further analysis, regulatory input and evidence and may be amended prior to finalisation of the Drought Plan. Southern Water does not invite reliance on this section in its current form.</i></p>
Work Remaining	<p>Report figures need refreshing before submission of a completed draft DP27.</p> <p>The timing of the introduction of TUBs and NEUBs in Hampshire will need to be updated in the Communications Plan. There are ongoing discussions with the EA regarding this issue in relation to the protection of our chalk rivers in Hampshire e.g. revised Section 20 Agreement and River Itchen licence renewal.</p>
External Deliverables	<p>Consultancy support N/A</p>
	<p>Regulatory support Amendment of the Section 20 Agreement and agreement on a River Itchen licence renewal with the Environment Agency (EA).</p> <p>Agreement with EA and Defra on the use of Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) and Non-Essential Use Bans (NEUBs) in Hampshire.</p> <p>Agreement with the EA and Defra on the case (or not) for Exceptional Shortage of Rainfall (ESOR) in Hampshire.</p>
Dependencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 20 Agreement; and • River Itchen licence renewal.
Critical Path	<p>Meetings and workshops with the EA, Defra and Natural England (NE) to agree a revised Section 20 Agreement and River Itchen licence.</p>

Annex 6: Management and communications	Description
Timeline	A programme of meetings and workshops need to be agreed with the Environment Agency during June 2026.
Decision points, meetings and workshops	<p>Communications strategy will need to be amended based upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes from the EA 2025 drought lessons learned workshops. ESOR workshop was held on 20th May 2026. • Agreement with the EA on a change to the River Itchen licence (and HoF). • Agreement on the case for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and ESOR regarding the proposed River Itchen licence change; and • An amended S20 Agreement between SWS, EA and Portsmouth Water. • Agreement with EA and Defra on the use application of NEUBs in Hampshire based on proposed changes to the River Itchen Licence.

1. Introduction

Effective internal and external management and communication are essential when responding to periods of prolonged dry weather and drought. This annex provides details on the steps Southern Water (SWS) will take to manage periods of prolonged dry weather and drought and how we communicate and work with our customers, retailers, stakeholders, employees, water industry regulators and other water companies during these periods of increased water stress.

Communication is critical and this annex includes updates to reflect lessons learnt from previous droughts in the South East (2005-06, 2011-12 and 2016-18, 2022 and 2025).

When a significant drought develops across the South East of England, it usually affects the whole region. As a consequence, we also work with other water companies in the South East and with Water Resources South East (WRSE) to ensure we co-ordinate our drought communications and, where possible, implementation of drought measures.

We have also taken into account documents including Understanding drought and resilience¹ by Waterwise (WW) as well as our own on-going business-as-usual customer insight work.

This plan continues to reflect the outcome of the Hampshire abstraction licences Public Inquiry (the Inquiry) in which an agreement was reached between the Environment Agency (EA) and SWS under Section 20 of the Water Resources Act 1991 (the Section 20 Agreement) to maintain supplies to customers and protect the rivers Test and Itchen. The time limited agreement allows us to develop and implement alternative sources of supply and incorporates a timetable of interventions that require management and communication actions be taken earlier than otherwise would normally be needed during drought. We are currently updating the Section 20 Agreement with the Environment Agency (EA) so that it cover the full duration of this Drought Plan.

¹ Waterwise: [Taking the public's pulse on temporary use bans – 2025 – Database WW](#)

2. Drought Management

2.1 Drought monitoring

During normal conditions, drought monitoring is carried out by our operational teams and reviewed for action by the strategy teams, through a monthly drought dashboard (see Section 4 of the main technical report for further details). This includes data from our own monitoring network and from the EA.

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. It is the responsibility of the Water Resources Policy and Regulation team to use this information to determine when water resources have breached a trigger status and to ensure drought actions are followed, including management and communications. Working with our Water Services team, they provide updates to the Drought Working Group on the status of our reservoirs and surface and groundwater abstractions. As well as information related to abstraction volumes, river levels, flows and reservoir fill-rates, the Water Services team also provide updates on the status of water supply infrastructure, planned outages, our water efficiency programme and leakage detection programme.

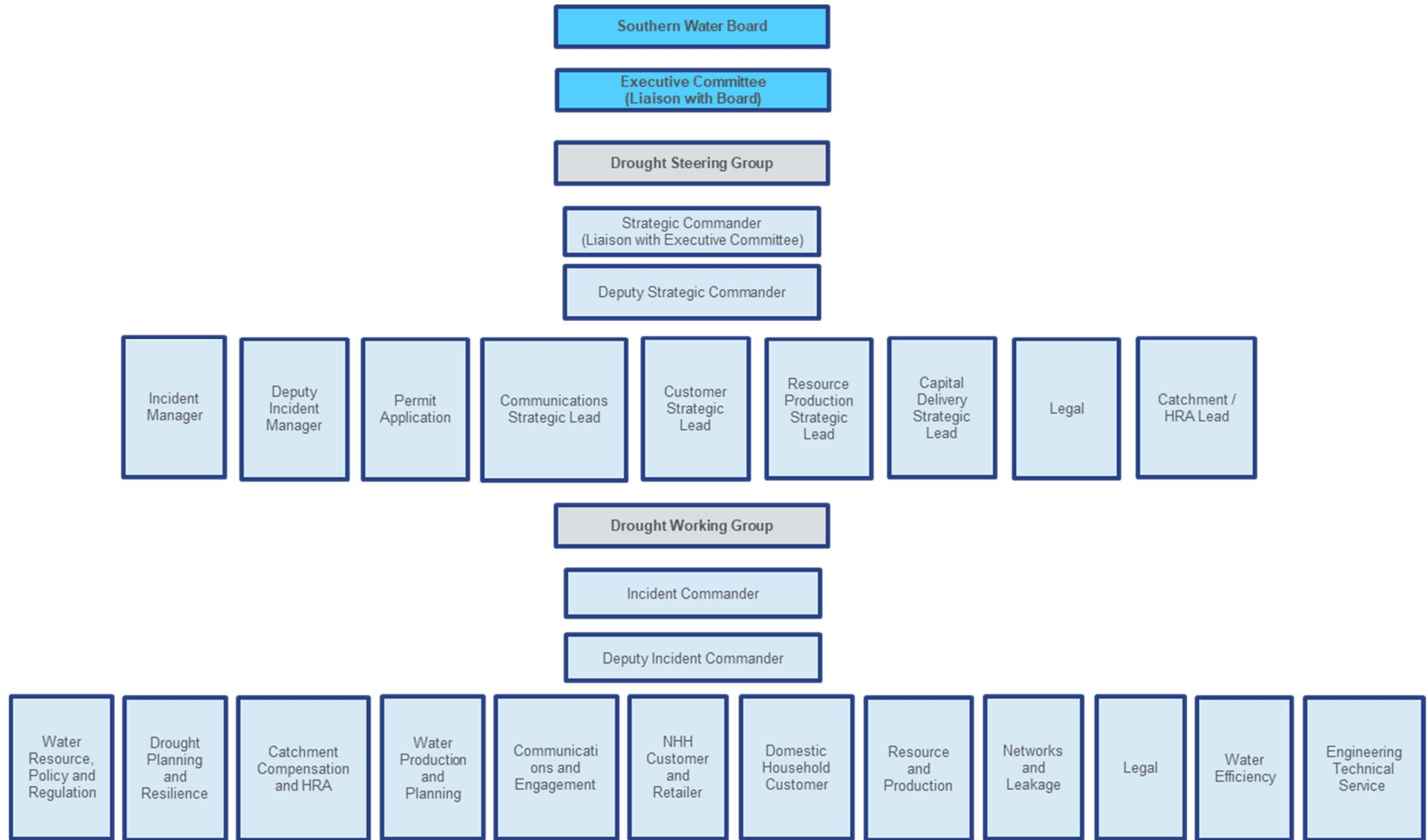
2.2 Structure, roles and responsibilities

Due to the sensitivity of our water supply catchments to drought, we need to actively monitor our rivers, reservoirs and groundwater sources. We updated our drought management structure in April 2025 in response to the emerging period of prolonged dry weather, which resulted in a drought in Hampshire. Figure 2-1 shows the updated management structure and all of the technical and managerial roles which are represented.

Our drought management hierarchy comprises:

- **Southern Water Board.** Responsible for final sign-off of drought management decisions.
- **Executive Committee.** Makes day to-day decisions for recommendation to the Board. Our Managing Director for Water has delegated powers from the Board to expedite some drought management activities and decisions.
- **Drought Steering Group.** Comprises a group of experts within the business who meet monthly with the Managing Director for Water to provide updates on our water supply position and drought preparedness. They meet weekly during periods of prolonged dry weather to manage a drought.
- **Drought Working Group.** Comprises a larger group of technical experts from within the business including those who attend the (DSG). They meet weekly to review the company water supply position and manage drought preparedness activities over the winter. The working group deliver drought plan supply and demand actions and environmental mitigation and compensation during a period of prolonged dry weather.

Figure 2-1: Drought Management Structure



During 2025 we amended our frequency of meetings to monitor and manage the drought in Hampshire and prolonged period of dry weather. We had separate engagement with the different EA Area Teams, DEFRA and NE. Our weekly meeting structure during 2025 is summarised in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Drought Management Meeting Frequency

Day	Time	Internal Meeting	Time	External Meeting
Monday	08:30	*Drought alignment call. Update on status of reservoir volumes, groundwater abstractions and asset health.		
Tuesday	11:00	DWG weekly meeting.		
Wednesday			14:00	EA Kent, South London, and East Sussex (KSL) update
Thursday			14:00	EA Solent and South Downs (SSD) update (Technical with DEFRA and NE)
Friday	12:00	DSG weekly meeting.	14:30	EA SSD update (Strategic)

*Note: During the peak of the drought in 2025 we moved to daily drought alignment calls.

2.3 Drought Manager and Water Resources Policy & Regulation Manager

Our Incident Commander delivers the function of a Drought Manager and leads the Drought Working Group (DWG). They are supported by a Deputy Incident Commander. The Incident Commander collates monthly and/or weekly reports for the Managing Director of Water in preparation for the DSG Meetings. The Incident Commander also represents Southern Water at monthly National Drought Group meetings alongside the Managing Director for Water to report on our company drought position.

Our Water Resources Policy and Regulation Manager sits on the DWG and DSG. They have responsibility for co-ordinating and submitting drought permit or drought order applications to the Environment Agency.

2.4 Communications and Customer Services managers

The Head of External Communications and Head of Marketing Brand will take the lead on establishing the roles and responsibilities within the Corporate Affairs and Customer Communications and Marketing teams. They co-ordinate collaboration with the Insight and Water Efficiency teams to ensure appropriate engagement with customers and stakeholders.

The Customer Services teams, including the Retail team and Vulnerability team, will also assign a lead representative who will work in collaboration with the Head of Marketing and Brand to align customer messages and approach. This may include appointing a dedicated Drought Communications Lead and Drought Customer Lead to oversee and co-ordinate all activities and sit on the DSG.

All communication key messages and actions will be authorised by the Managing Director for Water through the DSG.

2.5 Reporting

Minutes of meetings of both the DWG and DSG groups are taken to provide an audit trail of the key decisions, actions and responses to drought preparation or during an active drought. Regular liaison will be required between these two groups, the EA and, where appropriate, other water companies.

2.6 Drought Management with Companies and Regulators

We hold regular monthly meetings with neighbouring water companies, the EA and Natural England (NE) throughout the year where we discuss our drought position and drought readiness. We also have weekly meetings with the Environment Agency during a prolonged period of dry weather to discuss our water supply position and planned response. The frequency of meetings will increase by mutual agreement with regard to the scale and severity of the emerging drought conditions. During the drought response in 2025, meetings were held fortnightly in one water supply area with a reduced drought risk, while in another area more affected by drought, meetings were held twice weekly (once with a technical focus and once with a strategic focus).

3. Communications plan

We have developed a Drought Communications Plan to make sure we can communicate effectively with customers, stakeholders, regulators and other partners and critical organisations during all stages of a drought.

This plan has been updated since we published our DP22. This update has particularly taken note of:

- a further shift in a digital-first approach and hybrid working.
- insight gathered from customers – including young people, vulnerable customers, businesses and a broad range of bill payers from the Temporary Use Bans in 2022 and 2025.
- insight from customers across the wider South East through engagement with the Water Resources South East (WRSE) group, National Drought Group Communications sub-group; and
- insight from regulator and CCW reviews on engagement.

The plan is based on an escalation of activities as a drought develops and is designed to be agile and flexible to respond to the individual circumstances of each drought.

It centres on 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 and campaign groups, to maximise reach and effectiveness.

It is critical that employees are given accurate and timely information at all stages, so that they are able to communicate effectively with customers in line with material in the public domain. All public-facing material used in our drought communications, as well as during our consultation on our draft and final drought plans, is subject to a security review to make sure sensitive information about water sources, such as their location, is not disclosed, nor any information which could compromise national security.

3.1 Insight and lessons learned

Our approach is also guided by the results of insight which has been gathered. For example, we conducted research over a month window following our drought communications in 2025 with our Water Futures 2030 online panel. The online activities covering a range of topics in relation to our communications totalled 90 minutes of participant time.

Awareness and understanding of the recent hosepipe bans was generally high in areas with proactive, multi-channel communication. However, in regions with overlapping suppliers, awareness was inconsistent and often confused. Customers broadly understand the supply-related reasons for the hosepipe ban, yet many felt frustrated especially as bill payers.

When asked specifically about Southern Water's communications and campaign participants favoured the assets that had bold visuals, gamified practical tips and the sense of urgency was praised for being memorable in helping customers take action.

Feedback from participants on what they would like to see from water companies when communicating about drought is clarity, empathy and practical support. In terms of behaviour change, customers claimed to take action to reduce water usage when they understood the reasons for restrictions.

Our insight tells us that for our communications to be impactful we must:

- Provide deeper context – customers want to understand why bans are necessary, not just that they exist.
- Tone and relatability – avoid sounding defensive or patronising; use more real voices and community language.
- Make the impact tangible – use equivalencies to help customers understand the scale of their contribution.
- Improve consistency across regions – standardise terminology, tone and core messaging across all water companies to reduce confusion.
- Interactive tools – postcode checkers, personalised usage reports and more dynamic formats; and
- Consistency and accessibility – simplify terminology, reduce text-heavy formats, and make key messages easy to find.

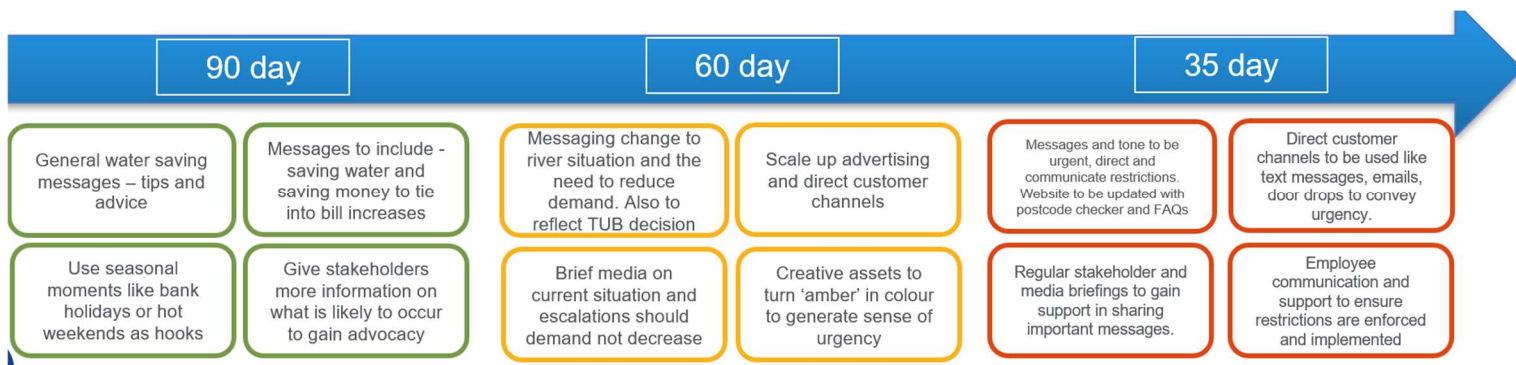
This insight will form the basis of our communications plans and messaging pre and during a drought event.

3.2 Our communications strategy

Our strategy is based on insight and lessons learned from previous drought situations. If in the event of an impending drought we will:

- Focus on digital-first channels – using channels such as our website, social media, emails, texts, digital advertising enables us to be more agile. We will also use live webinars with Q&A sessions to support engagement and will expand our use of informative films, animations and vlogs to help land our messaging. Printed communications will be used when necessary for example for notices and letters for vulnerable customers.
- Garner support from third party voices to help elevate our messaging – this could be through campaigners, influencers, stakeholders and the media; and
- Take a phased approach. If our messaging is too urgent too soon, we run the risk of customer and stakeholder fatigue and we will not get the support we need when we need it the most. Therefore, our communications will take a phased approach laddering up based on our Drought Plan trigger levels (90 day, 60 day, 35 day etc.) ensuring customers are aware of the evolving situation and changes should things escalate. An example of this is provided in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1: Drought Communications Phased Approach



3.3 Spotlight on Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

This communication plan is particularly important for the Western area (Hampshire and the Isle of Wight), as it will experience annual restrictions and drought actions until our new sources of water are “online”. Engagement with household and business customers, as well as stakeholders, is a vital part of the Section 20 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 is important.

In relation to the implementation of monitoring, mitigation and compensation measures for the River Test, Candover scheme and River Itchen drought permits/orders that have been agreed as part of the Section 20 Agreement, partnership work with third parties will be essential. For example, Southern Water and the EA will lead the implementation 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.

3.4 Drought phases

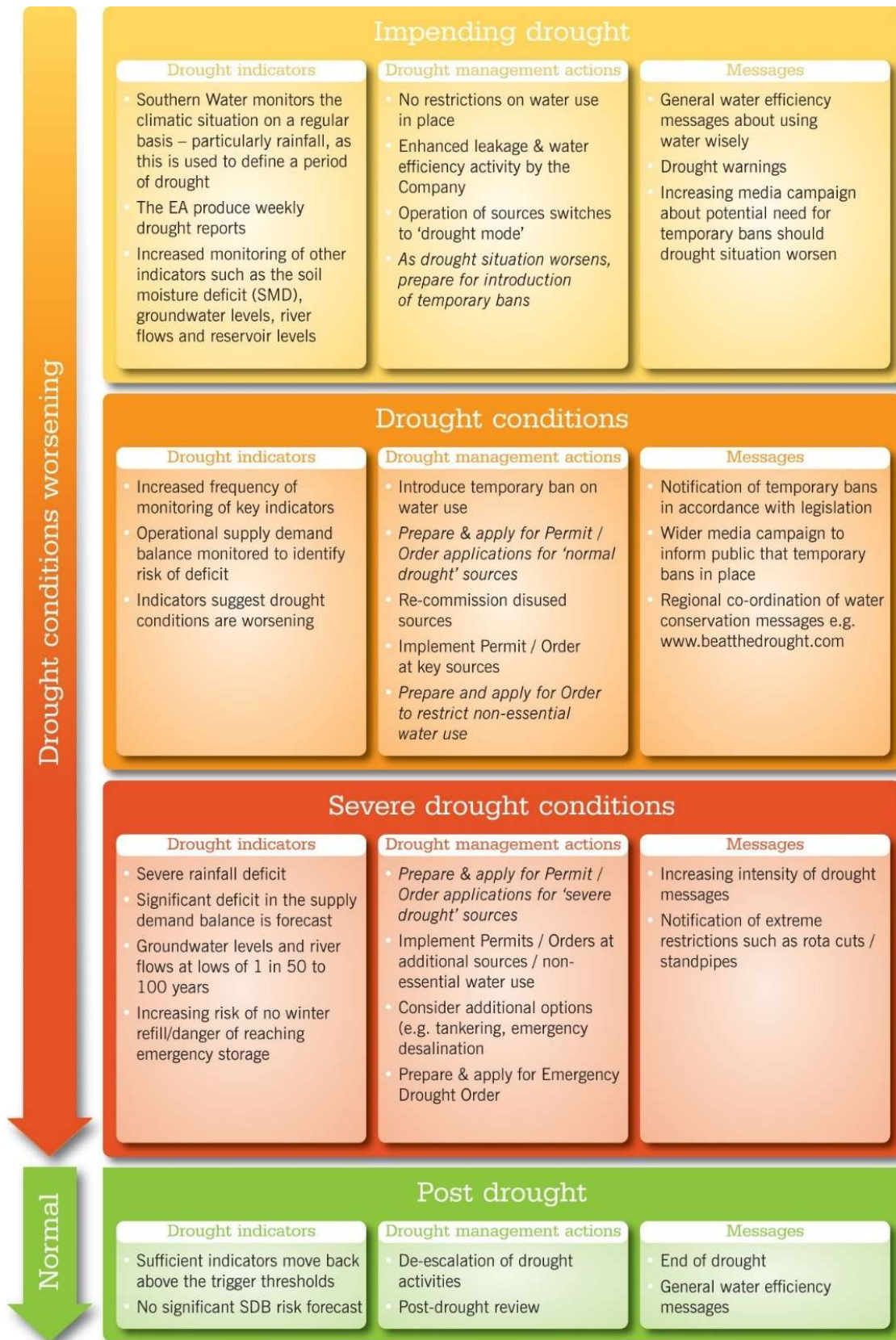
Our Communications Plan is based on a phased approach working alongside the Drought Plan, with activities increasing as a drought worsens. It is also closely linked to regional and national activities with other water companies, with a view to sharing information and developing a common approach to managing 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 |
| • Level 1 | Impending Drought (Communications/Increased leakage) |
| • Level 2 | Drought (Temporary Use Bans) |
| • Level 3 | Severe Drought (Non-Essential Use Bans) |
| • Level 4 | Emergency Drought |
| • Post drought | Lessons learnt |

Our 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 3-2 illustrates the link between escalating communication activities and the drought conditions and actions.

Figure 3-2: Relationship between drought indicators, actions and messages



3.5 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 and why it is a problem.
- inform customers and stakeholders about the work that we are doing to secure water, such as increasing leak detection and repairs, promoting water efficiency and developing new resources.
- provide a clear explanation to customers of the steps they can take to help, why their help is needed and the risks if no action is taken.
- provide communication which is adaptable and accessible for all.
- encourage household customers to save water at home and in the garden through increased awareness of on-going water efficiency campaigns.
- raise awareness with retailers and business customers of the water resources situation and action they can take.
- raise awareness with sectors in the hospitality sector to reach visitors to the supply area, particularly during summer months.
- announce and raise awareness of any water restrictions in a timely manner.
- make sure customers and stakeholders are aware of and understand the restrictions and exceptions.
- provide clear information about the relationship between rain, water resources, the environment and water use.
- work collaboratively with other water companies, the EA, the WRSE drought group, Water UK and the National Drought Group, as well as other organisations to raise the profile of the drought and ensure consistent, clear messages for customers.
- 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/orders where there is a need for joint working to undertake environmental assessments, monitoring and mitigation.
- keep stakeholders informed about the situation and work collaboratively.
- raise awareness of the drought and our activities internally with all staff.
- raise awareness of our long-term planning and innovation; and
- measure the effectiveness of communication messages and channels with customers at all stages, in terms of awareness and water saving activities, and continually adapt and evolve to ensure best practice. Share results and learning with the industry.

3.6 Key audiences

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

- Customers – domestic and business.
- Customers on the Priority Services register with tailored communication and channels – for example information in braille/large print, audio information, messages tailored for people with learning disabilities.
- Customers whose first language is not English – translations of material and messages.
- Young people. Non bill-payers and early bill-payers.



- Retail partners for business customers, schools etc.
- New Appointments and Variations (NAVs).
- Large industrial customers.
- Environmental groups – wildlife trusts, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), fisheries, Rivers Trusts etc.
- Representative bodies – Confederation of British Industry (CBI), National Farmers Union (NFU), Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), Chamber of Commerce, British Waterways etc.
- Sports and interest groups – angling, canoe, football, cricket, bowling etc.
- MPs, ministers, Defra.
- Local councils – all tiers.
- Regulators – Ofwat, EA, NE, Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI).
- Public services – fire, police, health authorities.
- Consumer groups – CCW and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).
- Neighbouring water companies.
- WRSE, Water UK, Waterwise.
- Employees and contractors.
- Media – print, radio, broadcast, online.
- Social media; and
- Local resilience forums.

3.7 Key messages

The key messages communicated during a drought will be simple, clear, consistent and tailored to the situation and audiences. Wherever possible and most effective to do so, messages and material will be co-ordinated with regional water companies and/or wider UK water companies to ensure clarity and consistency for customers and efficiency in roll out.

The messages will be communicated in a consistent manner, utilising multiple channels tailored to each audience.

We have materials prepared and used in previous drought situations, as well as heatwave and cold weather incidents. These input into a bank of core messages prepared in advance, which can be quickly tailored to the individual circumstances for utilisation in a short space of time.

Material can be updated, approved and circulated within a few weeks, and in some cases one or two days, for example, social media and website tools.

The key messages will include:

- Water scarcity awareness.
- Early warnings around a risk of drought.
- Benefits of water efficiency – saving water, energy, money and protecting the environment.
- Explaining the meaning of a drought.
- The reason(s) we are in a drought.
- Droughts are part of water resource planning; we are prepared.
- The reason(s) for us to act now.
- The geographical area the drought covers.
- Information on rain and the impact on reservoirs and groundwater supplies.
- The actions we are taking to supply and save water.

- The actions we are taking to reduce leakage and the process for reporting leaks.
- Providing information on how homes and businesses can help save water (important to communicate 'why' ahead of 'how').
- Water-saving in gardens.
- Internal plumbing – leaks and water-saving devices – use of approved WaterSafe plumbers trained in the water regulations to save water.
- Information on the Water Label and choosing water-saving appliances.
- Our initiatives to support water saving – audits, devices, advice, incentives (e.g. donations to charities or schools).
- The difference that our actions will make.
- Droughts affect everyone – messages from third parties, e.g. Met Office; NFU; sports organisations/players; gardeners.
- Consultation on introduction of water restrictions – how people can take part.
- Proposed timeline of activities.
- The restrictions are in place, what they cover, who do they effect and why.
- Individuals, groups and activities that are exempt from restrictions.
- Targeted advice for vulnerable customers/customers on the Priority Services Register about additional support.
- Early warning for business customers, via joint messaging, on potential of NEUBs.
- Impact on the economy.
- Our efforts to secure new water.
- The effect on the environment and how we are protecting it, using local examples.
- Thanking customers for their support; sharing the impact of their support.
- Sources for more information and support and the ways to access them.
- Extreme drought – ways to significantly reduce water use to 50/80 litres per person per day to avoid rota cuts and standpipes.
- Potential impact of extreme water measures.
- The impact that customers' efforts are having; and
- The end of drought.

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

In the Western area, to align with the Section 20 Agreement, there will be a need to tailor some of the key messages to ensure 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 reduce the frequency of formal water use restrictions.
- What we are doing to reduce leakage and help customers save water.
- Why restrictions might need to be implemented more often when previously they have not been needed in Hampshire since 1976.
- Why we need to apply for a drought permit on the River Test more often.
- Why we may prepare and submit applications for drought permits/orders but then not need to use them.
- How the rivers Test and Itchen will benefit from the additional protection the licence changes will provide.
- How the mitigation measures which are being implemented will minimise the impact of the River Test Drought Permit, as well as the River Test, Candover scheme and Itchen drought orders if needed, on the environment.

- Why there is a close link between water resource availability on the Isle of Wight and that in Hampshire; and
- What we are doing to increase resilience to droughts in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight through our Major Projects.

3.8 Key channels

We use multiple channels to communicate with customers, stakeholders and other interested parties in order to reach as wide an audience as possible in the most effective manner. Below are the core channels we will use during the escalating levels of drought:

- News releases, audio and film interviews for radio stations and online platforms.
- Photography, graphics, animations, film and vlogs.
- Social media posts – including graphics, animation, film, live QA sessions/bite-size chunks of information with a clear call to action.
- Graphics to clearly communicate restrictions, exemptions and water-saving actions.
- Emails/text messages/letters/leaflets/postcards for customers.
- Dedicated section on website to house material, including FAQs.
- Interactive online tool to describe the stages of drought and the restrictions/exemptions allowed during each stage – with postcode search.
- Stakeholder and MP emails/e-newsletter.
- Events including our customer drop-in sessions – Your Water Matters.
- Retailer forums, bulletins, newsletters and monthly account meetings.
- NAV forums, bulletins, newsletters and monthly account meetings.
- Business to business communications like Chambers of Commerce.
- Parliamentary briefing events with key MPs and their special advisors.
- Live and recorded webinars to share information and answer FAQs – tailored for households, business sectors, retailers, stakeholders.
- Briefing notes for customer services and all customer-facing employees.
- Schools and education engagement.
- Local inspectors supporting customers (particularly those on the Priority Services Register).
- Articles for staff bulletins, emails and daily announcements.
- PowerPoint packs for internal and external presentations.
- Advertising – potential regional radio/TV campaign co-ordinated and delivered through a regional or national Drought Group/Water UK with joint funding, online advertising through Google and social media channels and regional newspapers; and
- Trusted third-party channels.

4. Drought communication actions

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

4.1 Normal: no drought

Communication and engagement with all customers, stakeholders and our communities about water use, water scarcity, water supply, rain and water levels and the importance of using water wisely are critical to developing a better understanding before a drought develops.

Insight gathered from customers in recent years has shown most people feel water is reliable and plentiful. Many acknowledged that water is not something they consciously think about much and they could be more efficient.

This insight demonstrates the importance of engaging with customers continuously in non-drought conditions on water resources and their use.

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

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.

A key pillar of our business-as-usual activities is our Target 100 programme. We are committed to supporting customers to reduce their water use to an average of 100 litres per person per day by 2040. We are also aiming to reduce leakage by 50% by 2050.

The programme is encouraging, supporting and incentivising customers to understand the value of the water they use and supporting them to save through:

- Smart meters – We have begun our meter upgrade programme with the aim of installing 100,000 new meters in the first year. The new meters will play a vital role in helping us to identify leaks, reduce carbon emissions and help our customers use water more efficiently.
- Communication campaigns –providing education and information to customers on water use.
- Water saving visits –providing advice and free water-saving products and help detect leaks in both homes and businesses.
- Business Partnership Fund – financial support for local schools and businesses to implement water saving technologies; and
- Developers – engagement with developers to improve the water efficiency of new homes.

This is supported by wider business-as-usual activities which also include:

- an over-arching programme to raise awareness of the link between daily water use, energy and money savings and the impact on the local environment, including messages and advice on saving water at home and saving water in the garden.
- advice and messages on saving water in hot weather and cold weather.
- water efficiency for metered customers who are struggling to pay their bills, through the affordability team.
- regular updates on rainfall, levels of water sources and leakage levels.



- information on the current drought status and restrictions.
- engagement with retailers to promote water efficiency to business users; one-to-one relationship with large water users.
- talks to school and community and sharing a range of education packs, games and suite of education films.
- engagement with stakeholders at workshops, panels and in our regular e-newsletter.
- promotion of water efficiency activities, rainfall and water resources through the media and social media.
- partnerships with local council partners, community groups, environmental organisations and housing associations to share water efficiency messaging and promote home visits through their channels.
- finding and fixing leaks in line with our business goals and raising awareness about how to report a leak.
- water efficiency at our own sites and offices; and
- information in employee newsletters, monthly Company Conversations, Lunch and Learns and other regular communication to staff.

The promotion of water-saving campaigns is aligned where possible with regional activities through WRSE, Water UK and Waterwise (e.g. Water Saving Week) and key dates such as World Earth Day and World Water Day.

As described earlier, particular focus is put on the Hampshire and Isle of Wight supply areas to highlight the increased frequency of drought actions in the short term, through the Water for Life Hampshire programme. This raises awareness of the pressure on the Chalk streams, the River Itchen and River Test, in drought conditions and the programme currently being progressed to secure new resources and reduce demand.

Exploring water use with non-household water users is also important during non-drought situations. Research by the NFU with its members suggests a need for more measures to be in place for farmers to become more water resilient and less reliant on water mains. This is being explored further through our role in WRSE and its multi-sector group, of which NFU is a member.

Similarly, engagement with golf courses suggested there was an assumption that TUBs and NEUBs would not affect the golf industry, as many have their own water sources. However, they highlighted the consideration of biodiversity and protecting nature and a need to work together in drought situations for better outcomes.

Both our Water Saving Audits and Business Partnership Fund programmes have a focus in particularly water scarce areas.

4.2 Level 1: Impending drought

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

At this stage, the Drought Working Group (DWG) 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 raising awareness of the impending drought with all customers and supporting them to be more water efficient. There would also be clear information on the actions we are taking e.g. increasing our 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 and the range of audiences.

On-going insight with customers suggests many view droughts as a 'global issue' and not an issue in a country surrounded by sea where it rains frequently. Therefore, at this stage it's important to set the messages in a local context, in terms of the environmental impact, rainfall figures and water levels.

At this stage, we would liaise closely with neighbouring water companies and regional and national groups to understand the bigger picture and, where possible, co-ordinate messages and activities for clarity and maximum impact.

The 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 as early as 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 films, animations and bespoke graphics could take up to a month to create, approve and publish.

In the Western area, impending drought triggers have been reached more frequently in recent years and we have needed to prepare and submit applications for drought permits, which to date we have not needed to implement. Customers, retailers and stakeholders were made aware of this process, bringing a heightened on-going awareness of the potential for more frequent drought actions in the area and what this involves.

4.2.1 Level 1 Actions

At Level 1 we would:

- set up specific Communications and Customer Services 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 Drought Steering Group; tailor messages for audience segments – e.g. households, vulnerable customers, businesses, industry, retailers.
- develop comprehensive FAQs to circulate through all channels to customers.
- 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 FAQs for customer-facing employees to support their work.
- engage with retailers to agree a communication strategy for business customers; and
- plan for additional resources should the drought develop.

In terms of customers and the media, we will:

- engage with the media on early drought messages and water efficiency e.g. provide news releases, photography, audio recordings and short film recordings, rainfall figures and offer more in-depth interviews to highlight the problem and actions.

- develop a series of graphics, interviews and film and audio recordings/vlogs to promote the key messages on multiple platforms.
- promote water efficiency, leakage and early drought messages through our social media channels and those of partner organisations - Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- update our website for the possible introduction of restrictions e.g. raise the profile of the interactive postcode search restrictions tool to help customers find out what they can and cannot use water for in their area currently.
- emails, text messages and e-newsletters directly to customers (where data protection regulations allow).
- add information to water bills and customer billing portal.
- co-ordinate with partner websites and communication channels such as newsletters and talks e.g. local authorities, environmental groups, Citizens Advice, U3A, business forums, Chamber of Commerce etc.
- share information for schools and provide talks, assembly films etc.
- record webinar with employees to raise awareness, explain the impending drought situation, actions that SWS is taking and how customers can play their part.
- cost and develop letter or leaflet through door – in targeted areas if required.
- cost and develop an outline plan for an advertising campaign, targeting impending drought WRZs – newspapers (print and online), Google, social media, bus stops etc.
- prepare customer email and text messaging to raise awareness and prepare for drought restrictions; and
- update retailers through bulletins and develop schedule of update conference calls, with follow-up notes for those unable to attend.

For other stakeholders, we will:

- inform through e-newsletter and offer briefings, hold online webinar with an opportunity ask questions.
- add early drought messages to community and school talks.
- Share customer communications with NAVs.
- update regulators, MPs, ministers, council CEOs and CCW on impending drought status through one-to-one briefings; and
- engage with key partners to consider joint campaigns, HTA, NFU.

Internally, we will:

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

In terms of water efficiency, we will:

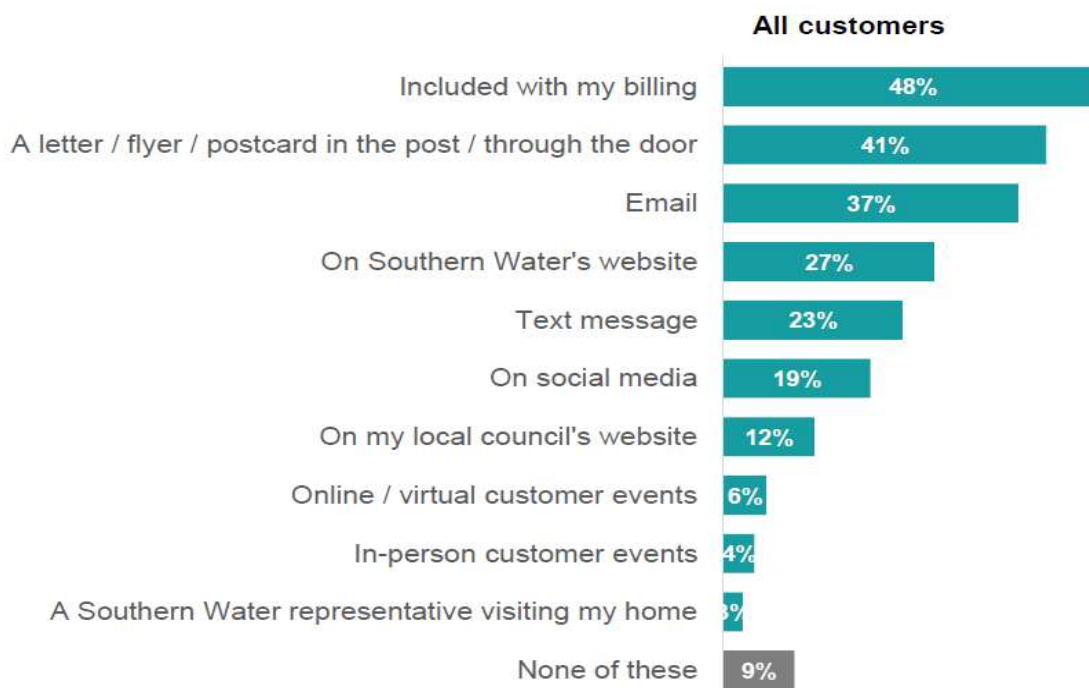
- focus water efficiency audits for both homes and businesses and campaigns in impending drought WRZs.
- increase offerings of free and discounted products.
- further promote water efficiency at community events and roadshows and through partner organisation's newsletters, websites and briefings.
- prioritise water efficiency through business-as-usual activities, e.g. on bills and on the website; and
- prioritise the promotion of water-saving activities on the home page of website.

Research with customers during the August 2020 heatwave showed their preferences for communication (Figure 4-1), which will be considered as campaigns are rolled out at Level 1 and prepared for Level 2.

Figure 4-1: Preference for communication during August 2020 heatwave water shortage

Future comms

(Southern Water customers)



4.2.2 Monitoring

At the onset of our drought communications, we would establish a monitoring and insight programme, as an extension of our business-as-usual engagement. 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).
- Specific insight tasks with on-going customer panels – household, business, retailers, young people, vulnerable customers and hard-to-reach customers – to gauge the effectiveness of messages, understanding and motivation to save water.
- Co-ordinating wider insight and monitoring with neighbour water companies, potentially through WRSE and sharing data; and
- Monitoring of any changes in water use in areas where the communication and water efficiency measures are targeted

4.3 Level 2: Drought

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

During a drought, we 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 listed below, having already prepared or launched the majority of the necessary communication tools and channels during the Level 1 stage. The majority of the actions can be initiated within a month of a drought trigger, some much earlier. The activities below are cumulative to those in Level 1.

In order to implement the Section 20 Agreement, the actions below are needed in the Western area before the drought trigger is reached. Furthermore, due to the agreed sequencing of actions in the Section 20 Agreement, the notification, publication and public consultation requirements of the River Test Drought Permit/Order will come before other drought actions, including TUBs.

In Level 2, we would:

- update key messages, informed by learning from previous droughts and insight, to focus on water levels, restrictions, exemptions, SWS's actions and how customers can play their part.
- update regulators, CCW, Water UK, WRSE and neighbouring water companies on drought status.
- align messages, applications and introduction of TUBs with other water companies wherever practical and co-ordinate with regional and/or national campaign.
- place statutory adverts for introduction of water restrictions and support consultation.
- continue to raise awareness of Southern Water's drought actions and longer-term Major Projects, particularly around pipelines, new sources of water and leakage reductions.
- ensure guidance on any restrictions is clear and consistent across all channels.
- agree approach on discretionary concessionary exceptions and ensure this is circulated clearly to employees.
- review staffing levels to support increasing levels of customer, media and stakeholder contact and engage support where required.
- liaise with fire service, local authorities and resilience forums over any restrictions.
- weekly data exchange with EA on resource levels.
- ahead of all drought permit/order applications, liaise with regulators, in particular the EA and NE, to review the monitoring, mitigation and compensation programmes, and share drafts of application documents; and
- prepare messages and communication plan for Level 3 restrictions and actions.

In the case of customers, we will:

- email, text and/or write to customers to inform them of the drought and restrictions.
- provide information about drought and restrictions with all customer-facing material and contact e.g. tests at customers taps, leakage teams, incidents, customer forums.
- include information about restrictions on our emails/letters/envelopes to customers about other matters (where appropriate).
- add a message to customers to hear when waiting to speak to a customer service advisor.
- place statutory public notices in the London Gazette and regional newspapers to introduce TUBs in the affected WRZ, giving at least 48 hours notice, and raise awareness generally.

- if drought permits/orders are sought, place statutory public notices in the London Gazette and regional newspapers and raise awareness generally.
- develop short video clips and QA sessions to promote drought messages online – with clear information on what is restricted, exemptions and how to find out more.
- contact vulnerable customers on the Priority Services Register to keep them informed, manage their concerns and ensure customers who require a constant supply of water for medical conditions are prioritised.
- update FAQs for customers, tailored to specific audiences, and make public on multiple channels – ensure accessible formats are available – e.g. braille, large print and alternative languages.
- extend the media campaign to declare the drought and escalate to national media – organise press visits to see river or reservoir levels as well as works on our major projects and provide media spokespeople for interview, pre-record radio and film interviews and footage for distribution, downloadable photos and fact sheets.
- extend the dedicated drought section on the Southern Water website and promote drought and water resources information.
- promote the restrictions postcode 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, LinkedIn.
- brief local influencers/bloggers to help disseminate helpful information.
- share case studies of best practice in water saving.
- distribute information on drought and restrictions at community events and place them in libraries and other public venues (if pandemic allows) and share digital information for websites and newsletters for partner organisations.
- continue to promote and target water efficiency and water audits through all channels.
- launch advertising campaign to raise awareness in most relevant publications e.g. newspapers, radio, cinema, council publications, libraries, Facebook, Google, partner websites, ferries.
- Increase frequency of bulletins and conference calls with retail partners, in particular hospitals, nursing and care homes as a drought worsens; and
- engage with retailers on messaging and advance warning of restrictions for their customers if drought worsens.

In the case of stakeholders, we will:

- develop a drought briefing pack for employees to disseminate information with stakeholders during business-as-usual activities.
- continue updates to stakeholders through email/e-newsletters and offer one-to-one briefings, online workshops and site tours.
- hold online meetings/webinars with the SWS teams to share information and answer questions (using films, graphics and polls to engage the audiences) – tailor webinars for specific audiences – e.g. retailers, small business, farmers etc.
- work with Water UK, WRSE and neighbouring water companies on joint stakeholder and government briefings.
- engage with trade organisations such as the HTA where business customers are likely to be impacted by future restrictions.
- Share customer communications with NAVs.
- Engage with NAVs at an early point as regards any drought permits/orders sought.
- engage partners such as Waterwise, WWF, the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust (WWT) and local wildlife trusts to raise awareness of pressure on water resources and the environment.

- initiate a specific stakeholder engagement plan ahead of applications for drought permits/orders. This can include an e-newsletter/letter to our stakeholder database for the affected area, with an offer of one-to-one and online group briefings ahead of applications being submitted; and
- produce exhibition boards to support drought briefing events.

Internally, we will:

- update employees through bulletins, online staff announcements and emails, in team briefings and through posters in offices and at operational sites.
- update FAQs on drought and restrictions for all customer-facing employees and make sure they are easily available, including leaflets/postcards to give out.
- share key drought messages through Executive email/blog.
- engage drought champions to support communications with customers and employees; and
- promote drought messages where possible on company vehicles.

At this stage the water-saving messages will focus on the restrictions imposed under TUBs and clearly communicate to customers what is allowed, what is prohibited, what the exemptions are and for whom.

In addition, continue with messages around general water-saving behaviour in homes and gardens for household customers. The messages will re-iterate why water-saving is important and how it can make a difference, what we are doing, and the impact on the environment.

We will share tailored water-saving information with retailers for business customers and engage with sector organisations, e.g. HTA, in anticipation of them taking action ahead of NEUBs.

Monitoring will continue as described earlier in Level 1, with specific insight to understand awareness of TUBs and exemptions and response to messages and collated water savings. This will inform updates to approaches and messages.

We will also prepare messages and material, with a focus on retailers and businesses, should the drought worsen.

4.4 Level 3: Severe drought

If a drought escalates and reaches severe drought status, it is likely that further restrictions will be required – NEUBs – 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 we may be applying for drought permits/orders to abstract more water, introduce new sources or request new licences.

Co-ordination with neighbouring water companies, WRSE, Water UK, regulators, CCW 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 Level 1 and Level 2. In general, we would:

- place statutory public notices in the London Gazette and regional newspapers and raise awareness generally if drought permits/orders are sought.
- provide publicity, literature and legal notices for NEUB restrictions.

- provide information for a public inquiry if required for drought orders.
- engage with retailers and NAVs on introduction of NEUBs for their customers to ensure consistency.
- update FAQs and briefing notes for employees and circulate.
- update key messages and align with other water companies, regional and UK groups.
- update drought champions and employees on escalating restrictions.
- initiate a dedicated Customer Services team to support customers affected by NEUBs; and
- maintain contact with vulnerable customers through the dedicated Vulnerability team to ensure messages are accessible to all (for example, in braille/large print) and customers with mental health challenges are supported as messaging intensifies.

In the case of customers, we will:

- update all customers by letters, email, text and through e-newsletter as required and tailored to ensure accessibility for all.
- increase frequency of bulletins and conference calls with retailers with a focus on monitoring and mitigating the impact on businesses and providing clarity on the restrictions and exemptions.
- liaise directly with businesses where required, in agreement with retail partner.
- extend and continue the media campaign, with updates on resources, rainfall and impact on households, businesses and the environment.
- update graphics and film, audio, photography material to communicate clear, simple messages to a range of audiences.
- extend and continue advertising campaign – work with Water UK/National Drought Group to collaborate on further shared resources to maximise budgets and ensure consistency.
- hold editor briefings (face-to-face or online).
- Engage with business to business communications like Chambers of Commerce to support our messaging.
- hold live webinars to share information and answer questions – tailored to audiences.
- increase frequency of updates on social media channels.
- update the drought section on the website with latest restrictions.
- increase work with partners to promote the activities.
- continue to promote the actions we are taking to tackle the drought; and
- promote blogs and vlogs by us and partner organisation.

For stakeholders, we will:

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

Internally, we will:

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

In terms of water efficiency, we will:

- expand the water efficiency campaign, audits and promotions.

- work with retailers on specific campaigns to support business customers impacted by NEUBs; and
- work with schools and sports clubs to explore alternative approaches to water use and share examples of best practice.

4.4.1 Messages

Communication messages will focus on the restrictions imposed under NEUBs and TUBs and clearly communicate to customers what is allowed, what is prohibited and what exemptions are allowed and for who.

The messages will re-iterate why water-saving is required, what we are doing on our part, and the difference that everyone can make to support the environment. The messages would continue around general water-saving behaviour in homes and gardens.

Monitoring will continue as described earlier for Level 1 and Level 2, with an increased focus on the impact on businesses, the economy and the environment. Consideration will also be given to preparing messages and material should the drought worsen further.

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 a high-profile media and advertising campaign.
- extend range and reach of advertising – television and online – in partnership with regional and national organisations e.g. Water UK.
- update FAQs, 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 to answer detailed questions about restrictions and exemptions, in particular within the Vulnerability team and Retail team to support vulnerable groups and businesses.
- update employees and contractors through existing channels.
- liaise with regulators, CCW, ministers, Water UK and water companies to plan for continued drought; and
- continue insight work with household and business customers, vulnerable customers and retailers to understand the impact of restrictions, their level of engagement in saving water and their expectations for next steps.

4.4.2 Pre-emergency drought

If a severe drought continues to worsen and moves towards emergency drought and a realistic prospect of extreme interventions such as rota cuts or standpipes, much stronger water-saving messages could be introduced to encourage customers to reduce their personal water use to as low as 50 or 80 litres per person per day – following the example in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2018 and more recently South East Water in 2025.

We would utilise a water-use calculation table developed by the industry which clearly demonstrates how households can reduce their water use to these levels – with information on the amount of washing loads per week, dishwasher use per week, toilet flushes per day, time in shower etc.

Such a water-saving campaign would be supported by very clear information on the context of the drought, why it was so challenging, the actions being taken by us and other water companies to tackle the drought and the impact on the environment.

We anticipate such action and communication is likely to be led at a regional or national level.

Our customer insight work, and that undertaken by WRSE, repeatedly demonstrates that customers would find the introduction of extreme measures such as rota cuts and standpipes unacceptable.

4.5 Level 4: Emergency drought

The likelihood of an emergency drought occurring in our region is extremely remote, due to our approach to planning for a wider range of more extreme droughts.

Currently the risk stands at 1-in-500 years on average although this will vary depending on the availability of drought intervention measures in each WRZ.

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 we 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.

We also have 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 co-operate 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 we already engage with to ensure we are prepared for such eventualities.

An emergency drought communications plan is being developed for our Emergency Drought Plan in 2026, to ensure we're in a strong position to stand up our communications quickly should we need to.

4.6 End of a drought

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

- continue with regular updates to the media, all customers, retailers and partners.
- provide positive reinforcement for customers where their actions have reduced water consumption and an expression of appreciation for their efforts.
- update employees through internal communication channels.
- clearly announce lifting of restrictions through all channels outlined previously.
- update FAQs, website and social media channels.
- update retail partners on lifting of restrictions and customer messages.
- gather feedback from customers, stakeholders and partners.
- evaluate communication channels and messages and undertake customer research.
- continue water efficiency promotions and audits.
- continue to promote the work we are doing in the long term and the nature of the South East as a water-stressed region.
- communicate the impact on the environment of the drought and considerations for future water resource planning; and
- carry out an internal review of communications, share lessons learnt with Water UK, CCW, WRSE and other water companies and update the Drought Plan.

5. Key media in our region

5.1 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

5.2 Radio stations

Arrow FM
BBC Radio Kent
BBC Radio Solent
BBC Sussex
Breeze 107
Capital FM
South Coast 106
Express FM
Heart FM
Isle of Wight Radio

Jack FM (South Coast)
Juice Brighton
KM FM
Original 106
Sovereign FM
Spire FM
Spirit FM
More FM
Wave 105FM

5.3 TV stations

BBC South
ITV Meridian
BBC South East
ITV Meridian South East
KMTV Kent
That's TV

5.4 Websites

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

6. Examples of water-saving and drought messages and material

6.1 Drought restrictions online postcode checker

Find out more about TUBs, and the impact this might have on you by clicking on each phase below.

Normal conditions

Before restrictions (Level 1)

Hosepipe restrictions (Level 2)

Drought order restrictions (Level 3)

Lifting restrictions

What happens during this phase?

✔ No restrictions

During this phase you'll be able to use water as normal. However, we encourage you to keep saving water where you can, even when there are no restrictions in place. Find out how to help save water below.

What we'll do

✔ Continue saving water

We'll continue carrying out our ordinary water-saving and leak-reduction activities. Our [Drought Plan](#) explains what we'll do before implementing TUBs.

6.2 Print and digital adverts



6.3 Social media



Q: What is a hosepipe ban?

A: A hosepipe ban stops customers using a hosepipe for non-essential activities including:

- Watering gardens
- Filling paddling pools, hot tubs or swimming pools
- Washing cars, patios or windows.

Q: How long will it last?

A: We'll remove the hosepipe ban as soon as we can, but this can only happen when there's enough water in our reservoirs, rivers and underground aquifers to meet demand.

Q: Why do we have hosepipe bans when sunnier countries don't?

A: The South East, like much of the UK, depends on regular rainfall to maintain water supplies, but it's recent drier climate and high population puts extra pressure on resources. With dry spells becoming more common, we're investing in solutions like water recycling, new reservoirs, including Havant Titchet.

Q: What is Southern Water doing about it?

A: We're doing everything we can to protect your water supply. We're delivering the biggest infrastructure programme in our history with mega projects including the UK's first new reservoir in 40 years and the UK's first water recycling plant. We're also finding and fixing leaks faster than ever and have reduced leakage by 20% in the last year.

Southern Water Sponsored

This spring has been the driest in over a century impacting the River Test & Itchen, which supply most of your water. ...see more

Water levels in the River Test and Itchen

Good	Water levels are healthy and above average for this time of year. But please remember, water is worth saving, so use it wisely!
Below average	Water levels are a little lower than usual, but there are currently no restrictions. We're working hard behind the scenes to keep your water supply steady. Please help by using water wisely - small changes now can prevent bigger problems later.
Current level	Low
	Water levels are getting low. There are no restrictions yet, but they may be introduced if the dry weather continues. We encourage you to use water carefully and report any leaks you spot.
	Very low
	Water levels are very low, and a temporary ban on non-essential use, like hosepipes, is likely. We're relying on your support to reduce demand and protect supplies for everyone.
	Extreme
	Water levels are extremely low. Emergency restrictions are highly likely and could include rationing or strict limits on water use. Please save water wherever you can, your actions really do make a difference.

southernwater.co.uk
Hampshire, now is the time to save water! [Learn more](#)

6.4 Customer email

WATER for LIFE Southern Water

MAKE ONE CHANGE

Save a little water, make a lot of difference.

It's raining but it's not raining on your garden. Perfect for a little water gardening, or just relaxing the garden.

But here's something you might not know...

The start of the year has been one of the driest on record in Hampshire, with only four days when it rained. The South East is a dry area and it's not raining enough to top up the water in the ground. A little extra water on your lawn and garden can help it stay healthy and green. It's a little extra water that can make a big difference.

MAKE ONE CHANGE

Save a little water, make a lot of difference.

Water levels in the River Test and Itchen

Good	Water levels are healthy and above average. It's a good sign for the river and the fish. It means there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy and the water clean.
Below average	Water levels are a little lower than average. It's not a big problem but it means there's less water in the river. It's important to keep an eye on the water levels and make sure there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy.
Low	Water levels are getting low. It's a bit of a problem but it's not a big one. It means there's less water in the river and it's important to keep an eye on the water levels and make sure there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy.
Very low	Water levels are very low. It's a big problem and it means there's very little water in the river. It's important to take action to make sure there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy.
Extreme	Water levels are extremely low. It's a very big problem and it means there's almost no water in the river. It's important to take action to make sure there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy.

Four water saving tips for summer

Keep the hose for a watering can. A watering can can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your garden and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

Use a bucket for watering plants. A bucket can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your plants and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

Use a watering can for your garden. A watering can can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your garden and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

Use a bucket for watering plants. A bucket can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your plants and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

Use a watering can for your garden. A watering can can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your garden and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

Use a bucket for watering plants. A bucket can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your plants and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

MAKE ONE CHANGE

Save a little water, make a lot of difference.

Join the conversation

WATER for LIFE Southern Water

MAKE ONE CHANGE

Save a little water, make a lot of difference.

This spring has been the driest in over 100 years.

Despite recent rain, we've had less than half the usual rainfall over the past six months. This means the ground is very dry and the water in the ground is low. It means there's not enough water in the ground to keep the plants healthy and the water clean.

Although we've seen some rain, it's not enough to top up the water in the ground. It's important to keep an eye on the water levels and make sure there's enough water in the ground to keep the plants healthy.

To protect these precious rivers, we've agreed to reduce how much water we take from them. This means we'll be asking you to reduce how much water you use. It's a little extra water that can make a big difference.

Water levels in the River Test and Itchen

Good	Water levels are healthy and above average. It's a good sign for the river and the fish. It means there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy and the water clean.
Below average	Water levels are a little lower than average. It's not a big problem but it means there's less water in the river. It's important to keep an eye on the water levels and make sure there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy.
Low	Water levels are getting low. It's a bit of a problem but it's not a big one. It means there's less water in the river and it's important to keep an eye on the water levels and make sure there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy.
Very low	Water levels are very low. It's a big problem and it means there's very little water in the river. It's important to take action to make sure there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy.
Extreme	Water levels are extremely low. It's a very big problem and it means there's almost no water in the river. It's important to take action to make sure there's enough water in the river to keep the fish healthy.

Four water saving tips for summer

Keep the hose for a watering can. A watering can can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your garden and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

Use a bucket for watering plants. A bucket can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your plants and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

Use a watering can for your garden. A watering can can hold up to 10 litres of water. It's perfect for watering your garden and it's much better than a hose. It's also much better for the environment.

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MAKE ONE CHANGE

Save a little water, make a lot of difference.

Join the conversation

WATER for LIFE Southern Water

HOSEPIPE RESTRICTIONS ARE COMING.

From 9am on Monday 21 July

Dear Customer,

You'll see in the news today that due to the continued warm, dry weather, we'll be implementing a hosepipe ban in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight, from 9am on Monday 21 July.

Following the driest Spring for a hundred years and a lack of any significant rain, our levels are critically low, and this is putting pressure on our ability to treat and supply your water. To protect our levels, including the River Test and Itchen that supply most of your water, and to keep taps flowing we need to introduce restrictions.

Don't worry, there's no need to call us, but if you do have further questions please [go to our website](#) where we've put all the information you need.

To find out if restrictions apply to your area, [see the postcode checker](#) on our website. While water restrictions begin on Monday, we encourage all customers to continue using water wisely as you've already been doing.

What this means for you

From 9am on Monday 21 July, please do not use a hosepipe.

This includes using a hose for the following activities:

- Watering your garden
- Filling or topping up paddling pools, swimming pools, and hot tubs
- Washing cars, patios or windows

We recognise that customers with medical needs, including Blue Badge holders and customers who are on our Priority Services Register for medical or mobility reasons, including Blue Badge holders and those on our WaterSure tariff may still need to use a hosepipe. These customers are exempt from restrictions, but any support you can offer to reduce or avoid hosepipe use would be greatly appreciated.

Find out more

What we're doing

We're working round the clock to reduce leakage, improve our infrastructure, and protect local rivers.

- In the past year alone, we've repaired over 7,000 leaks in Hampshire.
- We've cut leakage by 20% and thanks to new technology, we're fixing leaks faster than ever.
- We're delivering the biggest investment programme in our history, including the UK's first new reservoir in 40 years and the country's first water recycling plant.

Let's work together

As well as not using your hosepipe, additional, small changes at home can make a big difference, and support our efforts to keep taps flowing. You can help by:

- Turning the tap off while brushing your teeth
- Keeping showers to four minutes where possible
- Using the eco setting on your washing machine or dishwasher

More water saving tips can be found [on our website](#).

Together, we can make sure there's enough water for everyone this summer.