

# Draft Drought Plan 2027

## Annex 5: Lessons Learned 2025 Drought

May 2026



from  
**Southern  
Water** 

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## Abbreviations

AMP8	Asset Management Plan
DI	Distribution Input
EA	Environment Agency
HoF	Hands off Flow
NE	Natural England
NEUB	Non-essential Use Ban
PCC	Per Capita Consumption
SWS	Southern Water
TUB	Temporary Use Ban

## IMPORTANT NOTE:

Annex 5 is incomplete and the table below describes progress, along with work still to be completed.

Hampshire Drought 2025 – Lessons Learned	Description
<b>Section Completeness</b>	90%
<b>Work Completed</b>	<p>All Sections except Section 3.</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>
<b>Work Remaining</b>	<p>Section 3. This section has been drafted with internal meeting notes from the workshops held with the EA, NE and Defra on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026. We are waiting for formal meeting notes to be circulated by the EA. The third workshop is planned for 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026 to discuss the ESoR.</p> <p>A technical review of droughts in Hampshire and a changing prolonged dry weather response in the River Test and River Itchen will be developed for the final draft of the drought plan.</p>
<b>External Deliverables</b>	<p><b>Consultancy support</b> N/A</p>
	<p><b>Regulatory support</b> EA workshops and workshop findings.</p>
<b>Dependencies</b>	Outcomes from the Testwood Drought Order Lessons Learned session to be held on 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 with the EA, NE and Defra.
<b>Critical Path</b>	Completion of EA workshops.
<b>Timeline</b>	EA ESoR workshop pm 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2026. Section complete June 2026.
<b>Decision points, meetings and workshops</b>	EA Solent and South Downs team River Test Drought Order 2025 lessons learned workshop 3 – Extreme Shortage of Rain.

# 1. Drought Development and Resource Impact

This section has been included to capture lessons learned from managing the prolonged dry weather in Hampshire in 2025 and the River Test drought order application and hearing. We have incorporated lessons learned into our draft Drought Plan 2027. Lessons learned from the drought in 2022 are provided in Annex 6 of the fdWRMP24<sup>1</sup>.

## i. Drought Prospects Report

Drought Prospects Reports are regulatory requirements from the EA that evaluate the current and upcoming likelihood, severity, and potential impacts of drought for Water Companies. The assessment is at Water Resource Zone and Company level and the Zones and their respective Indicator sites are listed in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1:** Water Resources Zones assessed to produce a Drought Prospect report

Water Resources Zone	Primary Indicator
Southampton West	River Test
Southampton East	River Itchen
Hamps Rural	River Test/Itchen
Hamps Winchester	River Test/Itchen
Hamps Andover	Clanville lodge, River Test/Itchen
Hamps Kingsclere	Clanville Lodge, River Test/Itchen
Isle of Wight	Carisbrooke Castle
Sussex North	River Rother at Hardham
Sussex Worthing	Ground water -Chilgrove
Sussex Brighton	Ground water -Houndean Bottom
Kent Medway West	Reservoirs (Bewl/Darwell/ Powdermill)
Sussex Hastings	Reservoirs (Bewl/Darwell/ Powdermill)
Kent Medway East	Reservoirs (Bewl/Darwell/ Powdermill)
Kent Thanet	Ground water-Little Bucket

The Prospects report considers factors including recent and forecasted rainfall, Groundwater and reservoir storage, River flows and Water demand vs available supply. The Prospect is intended to support early warning and preparedness as it identifies risks so that operators and planners can act before supplies critically gets low.

The frequency of the reports is mainly dependent on the level of risk. In 2025 the EA requested the Annual 'Healthcheck' in April and, in response to the developing Drought conditions, further submissions of Prospects reports were request for June, July, August, September, November and January and March 2026.

<sup>1</sup> [annex-06-lessons-learned-from-2022-drought.pdf](#)

The methodology and format of each report differed from the previous reports during 2025 and the reports are therefore not comparable in their outputs.

## ii. Hampshire Drought

Spring 2025 ranked as the sixth driest spring since 1836 (Met Office, 2025<sup>2</sup>) and the Environment Agency declared that Hampshire had moved into prolonged dry weather status as of 11th July 2025. The significant shortage of rainfall across the South East in this period led to an increased strain on water resources.

March 2025 recorded exceptionally low rainfall, totalling just 7.8 mm for the River Test hydrological area. April and May were also classified as having Notably Low rainfall. Based on historical rankings, the 3-month cumulative rainfall for 2025 ranked as the seventh driest in a 155-year record for the River Test area, with a recent Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) score under a 3-month accumulation period indicative of extreme drought conditions. A drought order was applied for on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025 as the flow in the River Test was forecast to fall below the license condition flow (355 Ml/d) at the end of August 2025 under a 'very dry' (5th percentile) scenario, without sufficient rainfall to complement the groundwater supply from the underlying chalk aquifer.

## 2. Planning Inspectors Report

The Planning Inspectorate held a virtual hearing of the Southern Water River Test drought order application on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2025. The Planning Inspector's findings were published on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025, which outlined the main issues the hearing assessed which were:

- whether there is a threat of a serious deficiency of supply.
- whether there has been an exceptional shortage of rain.
- whether the steps in the Drought Plan have been completed.
- whether the costs and timing of the NEUB are justified.
- whether reasonable steps have been taken to conserve and enhance the SSSI, and biodiversity, with reference to NERC section 41 habitats and species of principal importance Report DO/25/01 River Test and NEUB Drought Orders.
- whether the River Test Drought Order would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the River Itchen SAC and, if so, whether there are alternative solutions or, if not, whether imperative reasons of overriding public interest have been demonstrated and, if so, whether the proposed compensatory measures are adequate; and whether a temporary deterioration in water body status is allowed because the circumstances of natural cause are exceptional and, if so, whether the conditions attached to Regulation 18 of the WFD have been met.

A summary of the Planning Inspector's key findings is presented in Table 3-1. We held a workshop in October 2025 to identify lessons learnt from the recent drought response and we identified clear improvement actions to strengthen organisational preparedness, governance, delivery, and customer outcomes for future drought events. We agreed to implement the lessons learned actions outlined in Table 3-1.

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<sup>2</sup> [Double record breaker: Spring 2025 is warmest and sunniest on UK record - Met Office](#)

Due to the 7 month period between the final draft of DP22 being sent to regulators for review and final publication of DP22 in August 2025, we had to use DP19 during the majority of the 2025 drought as it was our published drought plan. The use of 2 drought plans in a drought year had the potential to cause confusion regarding the use of the latest information (more precautionary drought triggers), versus the use of a published regulatory approved plan. We recognise that the protocol for the use of two published plans within a single drought year will need to be agreed with regulators before a period of prolonged dry weather is experienced, to ensure that there is a clear understanding on the use of a published plan and the most recent information.

### 3. Environment Agency Lesson Learned Workshop

We completed two out of three planned workshops with the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE) and Defra on 18th and 19th March 2026 to discuss lessons learned from the River Test drought order process in 2025. The workshops comprised:

- Workshop 1 – environment assessments, compensation and mitigation. 18th March 2026.
- Workshop 2 – project management and statement of need. 19th March 2026; and
- Workshop 3 – Extreme Shortage of Rain. Date TBC with Environment Agency.

We will update this section once meeting notes have been circulated between the EA, NE, Defra and Southern Water. Key aspects discussed and which need further agreement with the EA, NE and Defra include:

- Mitigation and compensation needs to be agreed with regulators so that it is clear which mitigation or compensation applies to:
  - the S20 Agreement.
  - a drought order application; and
  - an abstraction licence change.
- There needs to be a clear agreement between all parties on the sufficiency of mitigation and compensation. At present it is unclear what “enough” mitigation and compensation looks like.
- Staff resourcing is an issue for all organisations. The amount of evidence needed for submission of a drought permit or drought order needs to be reduced by being “application ready”. In addition the requirements for data sharing during the application process for a Drought Permit / Order need to be agreed.
- The S20 Agreement needs to be revised to enable continued use of drought permits and orders beyond 2030.
- The use and timing of the implementation of TUBs needs to be agreed with the EA and Defra in light of proposed changes to the River Itchen licence.
- For the River Test, a drought order will need to be applied for rather than a drought permit, until sufficient mitigation and compensation has been agreed and is available.
- The implementation of NEUBs before a drought order application is a policy decision and needs to be discussed with Defra alongside a discussion about the relevance of ESoR under some River Itchen licence scenarios.
- Can a drought order application be paused? The EA need to discuss this point with Defra as there is no provision in the drought plan guidance.

Table 3-1: Planning Inspector's Key Findings

Recommendation		Action
1	Be "application ready" for drought order submission.	<p>HRAs and EARs are being updated in 2026 for review by EA and NE. A timetable for completion of HRAs and EARs has been circulated to the EA and NE. It is recognised that due to the sensitivity of the Hampshire chalk rivers and the amount of monitoring data that needs to be assessed, the River Test and River Itchen HRA's and EARs will not be completed as quickly as desired.</p> <p>We have discussed completion of all HRAs and EARs with the EA and NE during a 2025 drought lessons learned workshop held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Mitigation and compensation needs to be agreed with EA and NE and linked to S20 Agreement, HRA/EAR assessments and in-year drought order applications.</p>
2	Strengthen ESoR case	ESoR is unlikely to be appropriate for River Itchen if the HoF is amended as proposed by the EA, as the 90-day trigger will be crossed annually. We will agree an approach for ESoR for the River Itchen with the EA and Defra as part of the River Itchen licence renewal process and development of an updated S20 Agreement.
3	Demonstrate full compliance with drought plan sequence	Make drought actions clearer in the sequence in DP27 so that everyone can see compliance.
4	Improve notification, consultation and procedural robustness	Needs to be agreed with EA whilst developing DP27. Triggers did not allow sufficient time for everyone to review and respond due to speed of river flow decline during dry weather in 2025.
5	Update and modernise EARs	See recommendation 1 above.
6	Take catchment scale approach to HRAs	This needs to be agreed with EA and NE as the S20 Agreement has a mitigation and compensation programme.
7	Secure, scale up and accelerate compensation measures	Some compensation measures cannot be accelerated as they have a separate legal process and timeline e.g. land purchase. See recommendation 6 to agree measures and delivery timeline.

**Annex 5: Lessons Learned**  
**2025 Drought**

Recommendation		Action
8	Link mitigation to drought order impacts	Should be covered in a revised compensation and mitigation agreement / revisions to the S20 Agreement. Need to agree and record future mitigation and compensation. Will deliver recommendation 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7.
9	Reposition NEUBs as a protective, not optional measure	The economic case and water saving benefits for NEUBs in the UK is not clear. We will work with regulators to determine how NEUBs are positioned within DP27.

Table 3-2: Southern Water Hampshire Drought Key Lessons Learned

Area	Findings
Strategic & Organisational Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a permanent <b>year round drought management function</b> to maintain readiness.</li> <li>• <b>Protect staff resource capacity for drought roles</b>, recognising this is diverting resources from business as usual activity.</li> </ul>
Data, Evidence & Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prioritise smart metering rollout in key drought risk areas</b> for improved evidence to demonstrate <b>customer behaviour change</b>.</li> <li>• Create integrated <b>leakage and drought dashboards</b>.</li> </ul>
Regulatory Engagement & Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be “application ready” by ensuring HRA’s and EAR’s are up to-date and mitigation and compensation identified and available within the drought year.</li> <li>• <b>Align early with regulators</b> (e.g. EA) on scenarios, triggers and acceptable deviations and build 6-to-7 month lead times for ESoR related environmental work.</li> <li>• Develop <b>early agreed mitigation and compensation</b>, which was challenged late in the drought order application stages.</li> </ul>
Customer, NHH & Public Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop <b>national level- aligned drought messaging</b>; supplement with targeted local comms and <b>NHH engagement strategy</b>.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder & External Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-arrange <b>media slots to reduce delays from newspaper deadlines</b> and push for <b>national drought comms coordination</b>.</li> </ul>
Leakage & Water Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Boost nighttime detection</b>. Increase field teams to meet 12MI/d per month find-and-fix requirement and earlier stand up for water audits.</li> </ul>
Governance, Hearings & External Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalise hearing and <b>external presentation readiness</b>.</li> </ul>

## 4. Effectiveness of Demand Restrictions

The impacts of the demand restrictions that were applied by Southern Water (SWS) during the 2025 drought are based on household demands. Figure 4-1 describes Distribution Input (DI) and Inferred Demand.

**Figure 4-1: Water Resource Demand Calculation**

<p><b>Water Resource Zone (WRZ) Demand calculation:</b></p> <p><b>Distribution Input</b> = Water Produced + Imports - Exports + inter-zonal transfers out + inter-zonal transfers in</p> <p><b>WSR storage change</b> is the change in storage (in megalitres) taken from midnight to the following midnight for each of the storage reservoirs within a WRZ.</p> <p>Then the inferred demand for a WRZ is calculated by:</p> <p><b>WRZ Inferred Demand = Distribution Input - <math>\Sigma</math>(change in storage of zonal WSRs)</b></p> <p>This metric provides a total figure for zonal demand, including all water used by customers (domestic and business) and leakage.</p>
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*\*Note we refer to inferred demand as it is not a direct measurement of the outflow from a WRZ but inferred from the inflow and change of storage within a zone*

The Water Produced figure used for DI is a sum off all water treatment site production. This is measured by specified DI meters that are verified on an annual basis.

### 4.1 Temporary Use Bans

Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) are a restriction on water use focused on hosepipes and often referred to as "hosepipe bans".

Under section 76 of the Water Industry Act 1991, as substituted by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, English and Welsh water companies can restrict certain water uses when anticipating or experiencing a "serious shortage" in supply.

Prohibited activities under the Order include using a hosepipe to:

- Water gardens, lawns, public parks, or allotments.
- Wash private cars, leisure boats.
- Fill or maintain domestic pools, ponds, or fountains; and
- Clean walls, windows, patios, driveways, and other outdoor surfaces.

Southern Water (SW) will implement TUBs to reduce consumption as part of our early response to drought. This is supported by the Environment Agency who encourage water companies to incorporate TUBs into their broader strategies to maintain supply and protect the environment.

If used as a measure to reduce demand during the early stages of drought, it is likely that exemptions and exceptions will be in place, typically to allow:

- Use for health, safety, or medical needs; and
- Priority Services Register customers (e.g., vulnerable individuals).

Analysis of demand data pre and post TUBs implementation in the Hampshire zones<sup>3</sup> during the drought in 2025 shows, on average, a 1.88% reduction in demand levels. This equates to a 2.67 MI/d reduction.

The same time period (99 days) pre and post TUBs was considered in order to reduce the influence of the peak demand period which was experienced pre-TUBs implementation. What has not been possible, in this analysis, is the breakdown of impact from the separate demand reduction schemes (TUBs, leakage reduction, You Save, We Pay Scheme, Water Audits) which contribute to the total 1.88% combined reduction in demand.

Based upon the 1.88% reduction (2.67MI/d) that was observed in the Hampshire water resource zones during the 2025 drought, it is estimated that if the same demand reduction methods were used across the whole water supply area during a drought, a drop in demand of 9.66 MI/d would have been realised.

## 4.2 National TUBs Review – 2025 Drought

The UKWIR report “Review the impacts of early implementation of Temporary Use Bans in 2025” was published on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Key findings from a review of water company TUB data collected during the 2025 drought included data provided by Southern Water.

### 4.2.1 Data, Metrics and Methodology

Three types of data were used in the assessment: DI, DMA and Household (HH). DI datasets needed to be complete and consistent across all companies to enable meaningful comparison and interpretation. The report noted that DI does not represent consumption as it includes:

- Leakage.
- Household usage; and
- NHH Usage,

Not all companies provided the same datasets which made the assessment more challenging. There were too many variables for an accurate assessment. However the data review concluded that it was unwise to present a single water savings figure for the effectiveness of TUBs due to the many variables that impact the calculation of the water savings. In future assessments, smart metering data needs to include property characteristics, potentially including property type, garden size and property inhabitants to ensure consistency across company data and to assist with data interpretation. The review concluded that demand management tools were useful, but their impact varied significantly by conditions and context.

### 4.2.2 Demand, Temperature and Behaviour

The review of TUBs data indicated that the main driver of water demand was maximum temperature, not prolonged periods of dry weather. Water savings were shown to increase at higher temperatures, with higher savings at temperatures of 18-20°C and above. Water savings varied significantly with temperature. The following bands of temperature with corresponding water saving (%age) were identified from the data:

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<sup>3</sup> TUBs were implemented in Hampshire from 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025 to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

- <17.5°C: 1.01%
- 17.5–22.5°C: 2.04%
- 22.5–27.5°C: 3.15%
- 27.5–32.5°C: 4.20%

Data indicated that demand starts to peak at highest consumption levels, with a delayed effect. It was difficult to say definitively weather behaviour change occurred due to communications or TUBs.

#### 4.2.3 TUBs (Temporary Use Bans)

The review of water company data indicated that TUBs generate higher water savings at high temperatures. TUBs need to capture all peak heatwave periods to provide maximum water saving benefit. However, the impact of TUBs appeared to be lower than previously assumed. Compared to previous hot years (2022) significant hot periods were missing in 2025, increasing pressure on water resources and reducing the overall effectiveness of TUBs. It was concluded that managing demand peaks before TUBs are implemented may be more effective.

#### 4.2.4 Campaigns and Communications

Communication campaigns resulted in a very small reduction in household water use (approximately 0.7–1.4%). Using household-only data, water use reductions ranged from 4.37–8.47%. This yielded estimated savings of around 30 litres per property per day in larger households.

It was impossible to isolate communications impact from TUB impacts. The review of communication campaigns showed that EA communications have greater credibility with customers and water companies are generally less trusted. Communications need to clearly explain:

- What companies are doing.
- What companies are investing in.
- How customers can help; and
- Where water comes from.

#### 4.2.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The benefits of TUBs is more complex than anticipated, with multiple drivers and interacting variables. Temperature, especially peak temperature, is the dominant influence on demand. TUBs and communications do help, but impacts are:

- Hard to isolate
- Highly variable
- Generally lower than assumed
- Data limitations and inconsistencies reduce confidence in firm conclusions.

It was recommended that water companies:

- Use the data directly to support decisions with the Environment Agency and demonstrate evidence-based decision-making.
- Manage demand peaks earlier, ahead of TUB implementation.
- Consider dedicated gardening / hosepipe days as a demand management measure.
- Explore a national or regional demand response forum.
- Improve smart metering datasets, including property and garden characteristics.

- Ensure TUBs cover all peak heatwave periods.
- Review customer incentives for saving water.
- Improve communications clarity around:
  - Company actions
  - Investment
  - Customer role

### 4.3 Enhanced Leakage Activity

Deploying additional leakage detection, find and fix measures will form part of our response to drought stricken or drought risk areas. This will be in addition to ongoing business as usual activity and would be considered an enhanced measure to reduce wastage and demand.

This may include innovative leakage detection and repair options, or increased resources to continue or increase original activity.

An example of innovative leak detection work includes a new approach using detection dogs which is currently in trial phase. The dogs are trained to identify a variety of scents associated with treated mains water, such as chlorine, which differentiate it from other water found naturally in the environment such as groundwater or rainwater. The benefit of using this option in rural and countryside areas is that it can facilitate leak detection in difficult to reach areas such as woodland. Our trials with detection dogs in Hampshire started in December 2025, and whilst this method is already being successfully used by other water companies, we will be monitoring progress to establish its effectiveness and viability for helping meet our leakage reduction needs in future.

Another innovative approach is our use of the Origin no dig repair solution. This is a leakage repair option which can be used to rapidly fix communication and supply pipes by employing no dig techniques. This works by isolating a section of the leaking pipe and injecting a safe, food-grade calcium carbonate solution. The particles in the solution are forced into the hole by the pressure, where they coagulate and seal the leak. The solution is then drained from the system as the pipe is re-pressurized. The benefit of using a no dig technique is that it removes the need for lengthy permit applications, excavation, and the associated safety, environmental and disruption risks, making it an ideal rapid solution for ramping up leakage repair during drought. We are monitoring to determine how long such repairs can be expected to last, but using this method can increase the number of leaks that can be repaired in a day by over 200%.

Figure 4-2 summarises enhanced leakage activity in Hampshire during the drought in 2025.

**Figure 4-2: Enhanced Leakage Activity in Hampshire**

Scheme	Definition	Number of Leaks	Benefit MI/d
Enhanced Customer Side Leakage Repairs	Offer repairs on supply pipes losing over 300lph for all Household and Non Household Customers to reduce leak run time.	131	1.12
Extend Teccura Detection work in Winchester	Continue using Teccura leak detection resource to focus on specific Winchester District Meter Area's. Additional 6 FTE focussed solely in Winchester water resource zones to enable PN Daly to focus on the rest of Hampshire	304	2.90



Scheme	Definition	Number of Leaks	Benefit Ml/d
Origin No Dig Extension	Continue with Origin No Dig repair solution on Comm Pipes to reduce leak run time and help reduce and manage WIP and backlog	35	0.42
Leak Detection Dogs	Introduce leakage surveys using sniffer dogs in rural areas to enhance detection capability where traditional methods struggle. Didn't start until December but we will monitor the progress and performance to establish if this is a viable option for the future.	0	0
Network Management & DMA Health	Identify schemes that could be prioritised in Hampshire to exploit the benefits from pressure reduction leading to reductions in leakage sooner	0	0.85
Enigma Reach	Bring in additional resource from Ovarro to deliver E2E Acoustic Logging surveys, using kits of 48 loggers which are deployed, retrieved and downloaded each day, generating follow up POI's for the detection resource.	128	1.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>6.57</b>

## 4.4 Water Audits

Water audits are an essential part of our commitment to improving water efficiency across both household and non-household premises. These audits help identify and address issues such as leaks and inefficient water usage, ensuring that customers use water responsibly and sustainably.

The process begins with a desktop survey, where data is analysed to pinpoint properties that are likely to benefit from water-saving measures. This stage uses consumption patterns, property type, and other indicators to highlight opportunities for improvement. Once suitable properties are identified, our specialist teams of qualified plumbers visit the locations to carry out a comprehensive on-site assessment. During these visits, they install water-efficient devices such as low-flow taps, showerheads, and dual-flush systems, and repair any leaks or inefficiencies detected. These interventions not only reduce water waste but also help customers lower their bills and contribute to environmental conservation.

Water audits are part of our ongoing efficiency program, but they become even more critical during periods of heightened risk, such as drought conditions. In these situations, we increase and target our efforts to ensure that water resources are managed as effectively as possible, helping communities remain resilient and safeguarding supplies for everyone.

In response to increased river flow risks in Hampshire following the driest spring on record<sup>4</sup> in England in 2025, a programme of increased water efficiency audits was implemented. In the 9 months between July

<sup>4</sup> [2025 drought: how it developed in England - GOV.UK](#)

2025 and March 2026 water-saving audits of 1,045 non-household customers in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight resulted in a total of 2.6MI/d savings. In addition to this, 1,417 household audits were carried out in South Hampshire in the 6 months between July and December 2025, resulting in savings of 0.05MI/d.

We have committed to reducing business water consumption by 9% by 2037 and as part of this, are offering free water-saving audits to schools and business across our region. Our Water Efficiency team has helped businesses, schools, and universities save millions of litres of water in 2025. Through targeted audits and device installations, the team is driving sustainability and cost savings across our region.

In Hampshire and the Isle of Wight our major achievements include:

- **Southampton Football Club stadium:** 149 leaks repaired and 345 water-saving devices installed, saving **287,408 litres** per day.
- **GKN Aerospace (Isle of Wight):** Across two sites, 33 leaks repaired and 159 devices fitted, saving **62,204 litres** per day,
- **Park Gate Primary School, Southampton :** 9 leaks repaired and 18 devices installed, cutting consumption by **11,040 litres** daily; and,
- **The Royal Hotel, Isle of Wight:** 86 water-saving devices installed and 3 leaks repaired, saving 7,475 litres per day.

We've also onboarded Southampton and Winchester Universities in Hampshire. Southampton University alone has achieved savings of 90,408 litres per day. Further information on these and other case studies in our region is available on our website: [Water-Saving Audits – Southern Water](#)

## 4.5 Non-Essential Use Ban

Following the initial TUB (household restrictions on non-essential outdoor water use), a Non-Essential Use Ban (NEUB) may be introduced if dry weather continues and supplies remain low.

NEUBs specifically restrict business and commercial uses, which account for roughly one-third of water consumption in the UK.

Under a NEUB, businesses must cease various non-essential uses of water via hosepipes, including:

- Watering outdoor commercial plants, ponds, fountains, or non-domestic pools.
- Operating mechanical vehicle washers or cleaning vehicles, boats, or trains.
- Cleaning non-domestic buildings, windows, walls, or industrial plant; and
- Dust suppression and flushing unoccupied cisterns.

With added business restrictions, NEUBs can push demand savings even higher than just being reliant on TUBs and household customers, helping preserve supplies in critical drought periods and avoid more severe measures like full-scale rationing.

Southern Water completed a cost benefit analysis of implementing a NEUB as part of the River Test drought order application in 2025. The Planning Inspectors findings following the drought order hearing stated that the Environment Agency did not support the application for the NEUB order because of a lack of evidence submitted by Southern Water. The EA agreed that the NEUB did not need to be in place before the River Test drought order for a Hands off Flow (HoF) below 265 MI/d, but would need to be in place before any

further drought order (consistent with Annex 1 of the Section 20 Agreement). Natural England and Wildfish did not object to the NEUB order.

The Planning Inspectors finding was that the costs of implementing the NEUB were justified and a NEUB should be in place before the River Test drought order due to the update to the River Itchen SAC HRA. As a consequence, the sequence agreed in the Section 20 Agreement was no longer appropriate. The Planning Inspectors findings also suggested that in the future, the earlier application of NEUBs should be considered as mitigation option. The Planning Inspector recommended that a trigger for the NEUB drought order should be considered for the purpose of enforceability.

## 4.6 Other Business Demand Saving – 2025 Drought

Southern Water operates a voluntary water-saving initiative for non-household customers, designed to encourage businesses to reduce water consumption during periods of drought. The scheme, called “**You Save, We Pay**,” offers financial rewards to businesses that successfully cut their water usage.

When drought conditions are forecast or ongoing, eligible businesses may be invited to participate. To qualify, participants must demonstrate a minimum 10% reduction in water use over a defined period, typically 3 to 6 months, aligned with the projected drought risk.

The process is straightforward:

- Customers provide an initial meter reading at the start of the agreed period.
- A final meter reading is taken at the end of the agreed period.
- If the business achieves the required savings, Southern Water will provide a financial reward equivalent to 10% of the water bill for that period, plus an additional credit of 10% applied to the account.

This initiative helps businesses lower costs while contributing to the resilience of water supplies during challenging conditions. It’s a practical way for companies to play an active role in protecting water resources and supporting their communities.

The results of the “You Save, We Pay” scheme are provided in the breakout box below.

### Results Summary of “You Save We’ll Pay 2025: Customer Contact & Usage”

- 224 customers initially engaged with the scheme.
- 14 applications were invalid, leaving 210 valid customers.
- 117 customers provided a final meter read.

### Usage Outcomes:

- 47 customers increased their year-on-year average daily usage (ADU), resulting in an increased volume of 10,786 m<sup>3</sup>.
- 70 customers reduced their ADU, leading to a volume reduction of 42,315 m<sup>3</sup>.
- 40,597 m<sup>3</sup> of that reduction meets the programme’s 10% savings target.

## 4.7 AMP8 Smart Meter Programme

Our AMP8 replacement and upgrade of meters started on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025. We aim to complete our smart meter installations in 2030 to reduce the gap in meter penetration. By 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 over 20,000 smart meters had been installed, with 5,000 meters being replaced with smart meters per week. Our smart meter installation programme is presented in Table 4-1

Our Smart Meter Installation is fully underway and includes the following activities:

- 17 FTE recruited into our Smart Programme Team, including our new Smart Operations Centre, which will manage our Smart Partner to deliver the programme and ensure we receive smart meter data at the resolution we need to enable benefits; and
- 20-year Smart Metering contract awarded to Horizon Water Infrastructure (HWI). In this arrangement, HWI are contracted to provide “Data as a Service” over the lifespan of the contract, providing reliable data flow to support us in driving our water demand reduction targets.

**Table 4-1: Smart Meter Installation Programme**

Outputs (Cumulative)	Unit of Measure	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
New installations	#	7,090	13,950	19,275	27,471	33,867
Household meter upgrades	#	93,478	289,453	538,523	774,863	934,160
Non-Household meter upgrades	#	6,375	16,444	21,760	35,303	50,766
Meter replacements	#	99,853	305,897	560,283	810,166	984,926

A summary of the forecast AMP8 smart meter programme expected water savings is summarised in Table 4-2.

**Table 4-2: Smart Meter Expected Water Savings**

Year	Forecast Savings (MI/d)	Cumulative Forecasted Savings (MI/d)
2025-2026	0.06	0.06
2026-2027	0.12	0.18
2027-2028	0.31	0.49
2028-2029	0.31	0.80
2029-2030	0.31	1.10

The Smart Meter programme has achieved the following benefits so far:

- We have secured water demand reduction tools as part of our contract with HWI (utilising the Suez OnConnect analytics platform).



- Via the Suez OnConnect platform, we have access to data from Smart Meters that are installed, and the platform is able to detect continuous flows, which we are sharing with our customer side leakage team for follow-up investigations.

We are delivering transformational new capabilities that enable water demand reductions, including:

- A customer visualisation “portal” that gives customers access to their water meter data.
- Customer side leakage engagement tools to enable identification and resolution of plumbing losses (which drive substantial PCC reductions).
- Customer side leakage engagement tools to enable identification and resolution of customer supply pipe leaks (which drive substantial leakage reductions).
- Working to integrate smart meter data into wider water efficiency initiatives.