

A scenic view of a stone arch bridge over a river. The bridge has two large arches and is surrounded by lush green trees and vegetation. The river is filled with rocks and has a clear, flowing water. In the foreground, there are yellow flowers and green plants.

# WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024: A SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2024



# Foreword

**Welcome to an overview of our Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) 2024 and thank you for your interest in this important topic.**

**This is a critical document, which sets out how we make sure we can continue to deliver clean, clear drinking water from 2025 to 2050 and beyond, even in the most severe droughts.**

We consulted on these plans in draft form between 18 November 2022 and 24 February 2023 and have used the feedback to help develop our final plan, which was approved by Defra in August 2024 and published in October 2024.

Our plan will mean that we will have enough water supplies to meet forecasted household and business demand over the next 25 years and beyond, even in the most extreme of droughts.

This is great news for our region and provides great opportunities for businesses wanting to operate or expand in our region as well as for economic growth and jobs.

However, fresh water is still a precious resource that we mustn't take for granted. It's important that we reduce leakage from our network as well as helping our customers reduce their water use through smart meters and through our water saving campaigns. Reducing demand means we won't have to take so much water from the environment, or treat as much water, which will reduce the amount of energy and chemicals we use too. Reducing water use at home can also reduce your bill if you are on a water meter.

The government sets targets for how much water people should use.



**We are forecasting that there will be enough water supplies to meet forecasted demand over the next 25 years and beyond.**

To reduce demand and hit these targets we need to work together with our customers and with manufacturers and builders with a shared goal to use water more wisely. We also work with partners as part of a regional planning group to tackle national water resourcing issues.

A huge amount of work has gone into these plans, and groups of customers, stakeholders, and our customer challenge group, known as the Water Forum, have all been involved in shaping this WRMP.

The main plan is a large, technical document. There is also a non-technical version, called the Executive Summary which is still a detailed version of the plan. This document you're reading is called the Summary and is an even shorter document that aims to help you, our customers, understand what a WRMP is, and how it is used to plan your water services over the next 25 years and beyond.

Your views helped us take the right decisions and shaped our final WRMP24. If you would like to read the full plan you can find it [here](#).

I very much hope you find this document informative.



*Heidi*

**Heidi Mottram,  
CEO**

# Introduction

**Our Purpose is caring for the essential needs of our communities and environment, now and for generations to come. We do this by providing reliable and affordable water services for our customers. We make a positive difference by operating efficiently and investing prudently, to maintain a sustainable and resilient business.**



We provide water to **2.7m** people in the North East of England

When you turn on your tap to make a cup of tea, have a shower or wash up, you expect clean, clear, and great tasting water to flow. It's our job to make sure this happens for you and that there is enough water for everyone in our communities and the environment – now and for generations to come.

The role we have in providing you with such an essential service is one we take very seriously.



## Where your water comes from

In the North East of England, we supply water to 2.7m people in Tyneside, Teesside, Wearside, Northumberland, and County Durham\*.

Depending on where in the region you live, your water will come from one of two Water Resource Zones (WRZs):

### Berwick & Fowberry WRZ

Your drinking water comes from a natural underground reservoir known as the Fell Sandstone aquifer. Billions of litres of water are stored in the pores between the grains of sand of this rock, which can be found beneath the ground from Berwick to Wooler and beyond.

### Kielder WRZ

Kielder Reservoir is the largest man-made reservoir in the UK and is used for collecting and storing water. When there hasn't been enough rain we can release water from Kielder into the Rivers Tyne, Derwent, Wear and Tees. This keeps the rivers flowing and makes sure there is enough water for us to take and treat, so that homes and businesses in the North East have a plentiful supply.

In Sunderland and eastern parts of County Durham we can supplement our river water supplies with groundwater from the Magnesian Limestone aquifer, a 100m thick water-bearing rock. There are also a few small rural supplies in the north and west of Kielder WRZ that are fed entirely from groundwater and spring sources.

We're part of a wider regional group, called Water Resources North. Read more about this in [How we developed our WRMP24](#).



\*We provide wastewater services only in Hartlepool where the water services are provided by Anglian Water. You can read Anglian Water's WRMP24 [here](#).

## Thinking ahead

Global warming is disrupting our climate and affecting weather patterns causing serious challenges to the world's water supply. It is resulting in more extreme drought, higher temperatures and rainstorms that cause flash floods. The water industry is so vulnerable to these climate hazards.

Our customers recognise this too. They've told us that investing now for the future to prepare for severe weather is important to them.

# 91%

of respondents were very concerned or a little concerned that areas of the North East could become water stressed

While we know the climate is changing, we can't be certain how quickly it will change and how this will affect rainfall and the availability of water, so we have tested our supplies against a range of different scenarios.

To do this, we have used the UK Climate Projections (UKCP), which is a set of tools and data that shows how the UK climate may change in the future. The latest projections are called Climate Projections 2018 (CP18) and can be found [here](#).

The climate change modelling shows us that our reservoirs in the Kielder WRZ are sensitive to climate change and that with less rain in the summer, we should expect to see our reservoirs reduce to lower levels before they refill again over the winter.

You can be reassured that our climate change assessments have shown that we don't need to build or develop any new reservoirs in the next 25 years or beyond because we have made sensible investments in our water resources in the region in the past.

However, to make sure we continue meeting the challenges of a changing climate, and make sure we have a reliable water supply for years to come, we need to do some careful planning - and our Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) is where we do this.





## Protecting our environment

As part of updating our WRMPs every five years, we agree with our regulators a list of environmental improvement actions we will take to further improve the environment around the rivers we use, our reservoirs and our land.

But our care and respect for the natural environment goes far beyond any legal requirements. We want the best outcome for the environment, in particular when our customers are in support of this and we can deliver these improvements in a way that is affordable for customers.

We're adopting low-carbon options, such as solar panels and wind energy where possible and embracing nature-based solutions as a priority.

Working with the Environment Agency, from 2020-25 we have many initiatives in place to make sure our rivers, aquifers (a body of rock that holds groundwater) and coasts are in the best possible environmental health.

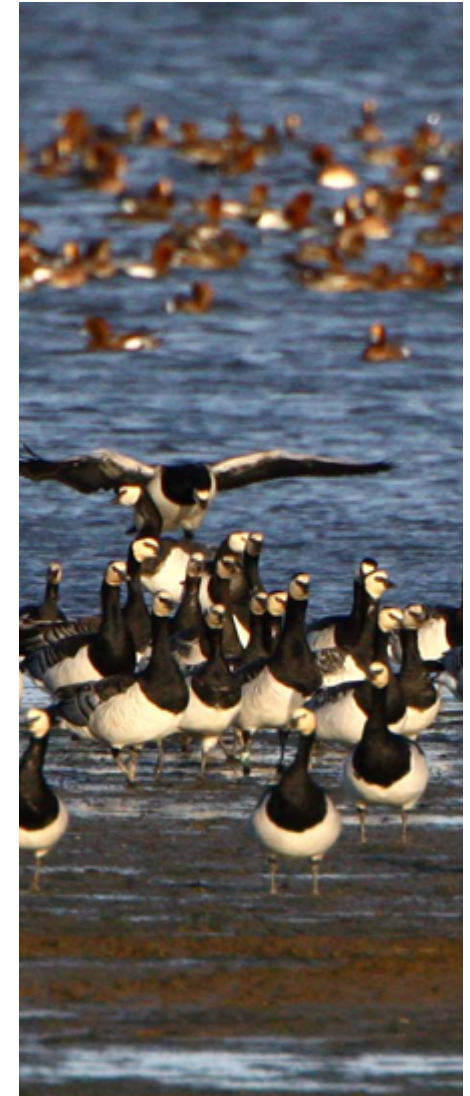
This covers things like measures to protect eels, reducing the risk of spreading Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) or offering grants to farmers to help them reduce pesticides and nutrients in river water.

We're reducing how much water we take from some of more environmentally sensitive groundwater sources and have changed the timing and volumes of releases of water from our reservoirs to reflect a more natural flow (high flows in winter and less in summer). This allows migratory fish to move up and downstream at key times in their annual life cycles.

We've also supported programmes to regenerate peatlands in the Pennines and supported partner organisations to improve river quality, increase biodiversity and address climate change in the South Tyne catchment.

For 2025-30 we've worked closely with regulators and stakeholders to identify what more we can do for our local environment. We've been thinking big with our overall aim being to create resilience in rivers and aquifers so they can support healthy habitats and diverse and abundant wildlife in the face of climate change, as well as having enough water for our customers' needs.

The water industry cannot solve these issues alone and we know that working in partnership with land managers, NGOs, local authorities, regulators, regional groups and the government can help us to achieve greater things for our environment and our people. We're part of a group of organisations established to oversee water resources planning at a regional scale for the North East of England and Yorkshire, called Water Resources North. Read more about this [here](#).



## Purpose of WRMP24

Over the following pages you will find a summary of our **Water Resource Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24)**.

Our main WRMP24 report can be found [here](#).

We completed a public consultation between 18 November 2022 and 24 February 2023.

We reviewed all of the responses we received and used them to prepare our final WRMP24 which Defra approved in August 2024 and was published in October 2024.

The key change between our draft and final WRMP24 was that we intend to be more ambitious with reducing leakage from our network by 55% by 2050 as we know this is important to our customers. Further information on this is presented on [page 17](#).



# What is a Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)?

## The Government needs all water companies to plan for at least the next 25 years.

While our WRMP24 focuses on the next 25 years, we've looked ahead 60 years, from 2025 to 2085, because it can take a long time to design, cost and deliver the right schemes. We test multiple scenarios and monitor things that might change, so we're ready to adapt our plan if needed.

The main aim of a WRMP is to estimate how much water our customers and businesses will need in the future (demand) and consider this against the water that will be available (supply), and then look to find the best solutions to meet any future challenges.

We consider a range of options and put forward our preferred plan by looking at which ones provide the best value.

WRMPs are submitted to Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) by all English and Welsh water companies every five years.

The WRMP is our plan for just one area of our business and forms part of our overall Business Plan for PR24 (the price review in 2024 where all water companies present their plans to Ofwat covering the period April 2025 to March 2030, and Ofwat decides what level of service we need to provide our customers, and what level we can set customer bills at).

More in-depth information can be found on our website [nwg.co.uk/wrmp](https://nwg.co.uk/wrmp).

## Our plan covers...

### Supply

- Water available from 'raw' water sources including reservoirs, rivers, and underground sources.
- The amount of 'raw water' we can take without harming the environment.
- The effect of climate change demand for water and available sources.
- The amount our water treatment works (WTW) can reliably supply.

### Demand

- Estimates of how much water people will use in the future.
- Impacts of population and housing growth.
- Our water efficiency plans to help customers save water.
- Saving water because of water meter installation.
- Reductions in leakage.

### Outcomes

By planning, we will have sufficient water available to meet the forecast demand for water to 2085.



## What's changed since our last WRMP in 2019?

**In our WRMP19 (Water Resource Management Plan in 2019), we reported we had enough water to meet demand up to 2060 and did not need to take any action to increase supply.**

Our plan committed we would reduce leakage by 15% by 31 March 2025 and promote water meters and water saving to our customers. Covid-19 and the associated lockdown restrictions has meant that fewer customers have chosen to switch to a water meter, but we are working hard to catch up and get back on track to meet our 2025 targets.

For our WRMP24 we, along with other water companies, have some new requirements from our regulators. From 2040, we need to plan for extreme drought that could happen on average once every 500 years (in our WRMP19 it was once every 200 years).

We also need to make sure there's enough water even if the Environment Agency needs to reduce how much water we're allowed to take in the future to make sure our abstractions remain sustainable.



**The environment also needs its fair share of water, so we are planning to leave more water in the environment than it currently needs to allow for climate change.**



# How we developed our WRMP24

**The water sector concluded that regional solutions would be needed to help solve national water resourcing issues and so over the previous ten years, five regional water resource planning groups have been set up.**

We're part of Water Resources North (WReN) with Yorkshire Water, Hartlepool Water, regional Environment Agency representatives and stakeholders from energy, agriculture, environment, and industry sectors. We all work together to set out how the supply of water in Yorkshire and the North East of England will be managed for the next 25 years and beyond.

Our WRMP24 links to the wider WReN regional plan, which has been developed at the same time.

Read more about WReN and the regional plan [here](#).

We predict a baseline, an initial estimate of how much water will be available and what we think customer demand will be from 2025 to 2050.

## Supply:

how much water we can take from existing rivers and reservoirs and treat at existing water treatment works. It considers climate change and any future changes to how much water the EA lets us take from the environment.

## Demand:

how much water homes and businesses will need in each year of the planning period. It considers existing demand as well as new demand in the future from population growth.

We then compare the supply demand balance. We do this to see if there could be a water supply shortage (not enough water) or surplus (extra water) predicted at any point across the planning period.



**We have tested the resilience of our water supply systems to an extreme drought.**

Importantly, the baseline forecast is for a dry year (extreme drought), and we do this to make sure we won't run out of water, even in an exceptionally dry year. We need to be prepared for worst case scenarios and this is the best way to do that.

From 2040, we are required by our regulators to plan for extreme situations so that we don't need to impose extreme restrictions on water use more than once every 500 years. For example, if we needed to restrict water and only supply it at certain times of day or put standpipes in public places for people to draw water from instead of it being supplied to their homes. However, because our region benefits from Kielder Reservoir, we will be able to meet those high standards and cope in extreme situations without having to put restrictions like these in place from 2025.

As we go through the modelling process to predict how much water will be needed and how much water will be available, there are lots of factors to think about including laws and risks, but we follow guidance from the Environment Agency and work with external auditors to check our planning process is strong.

Since the WRMP24 consultation, our customers and stakeholders have continued to help shape this plan. We carried out three phases of research to help us understand which options for our plan had the most support. The research took place in the form of online questionnaires, panel surveys and face to face surveys.

We incorporated the feedback we received into our final preferred plan which is our 'Best Value Plan'. Defra approved this in August 2024 and we published it in October 2024.



## How safe is your water supply in the future?

**Your water supply is secure for at least the next 25 years. Based on our longer-term forecasts, the North East has enough water to last until 2080.**

Once we have carried out our programmes to reduce leakage and household and business water use, there will be enough water to meet customer demand in both our WRZs. We have simulated the effects of an extreme drought and we do not need to build any new reservoirs.

We currently have enough water to be able to send some of our spare water to Yorkshire from the River Tees (by around 2040), and still have a reliable supply for our customers in the North East for at least the next 40 years.

We care about the environment wholly, not just in our region.

Yorkshire Water is predicting it won't have enough water to meet demand by 2040 as part of its own WRMP24, so we plan to send excess water to a region that needs it because it's the right thing to do.

Our supply is safe because of Kielder Reservoir and because we have the Tees Transfer system in place, so we can do this even if we faced the extreme weather scenarios that we have tested our plan against. If water is transferred to Yorkshire, there would still be enough to supply our customers, and this wouldn't affect their bills.

The new infrastructure needed to be able to do this will be delivered and funded by Yorkshire Water. This includes the upgrade of Riding Mill pumping station where an additional pump and new electricity supply will be needed.

A further export to United Utilities from Kielder Water was explored but won't be included as they no longer require it.



**We care about the environment wholly, not just in our region.**



## Water supply and demand

**Our plan will focus on reducing demand for water by promoting water efficiency, reducing leakage, and introducing smart water meters.**

Supply side measures are the things we can do to increase the amount of water available to customers. We don't need to increase supply, so we are only looking at demand side measures. These are the things we can do to reduce the amount of water needed by customers.

An 'adaptive plan' is one that would allow us to consider lots of different programmes or options. Water companies might choose to put forward an adaptive plan if they have a level of uncertainty.

While our preferred plan only includes ways to reduce demand, we have still tested our plan under different scenarios, including different levels of climate change and customer demand.

Our testing has shown that under all scenarios, we would still have enough water in both our WRZs across the planning period, so we don't need to put forward an adaptive plan. However, we can't do this alone. The Government has a target to reduce personal water consumption (the amount used per person per day) to 110 litres per day.



That's about **seven** buckets of water per person per day!

We're delighted that last year Defra announced plans to introduce mandatory water efficiency labels meaning customers buying showers, baths, taps, toilets, washing machines, dishwashers and garden related products would be able to see how water efficient those products are.



**Did you know leaving the tap on when you brush your teeth can waste 6 litres a minute?**



**To find out more watch our video [here](#).**

Building laws will also require new homes to be built with the 110 litres per person per day target in mind too.

You can play your part by using water wisely and making some simple savings. There are more water saving tips [here](#).

17% of energy use in the home is used to heat water\*. Saving water can also help lower your energy bills too.

[Try our water and energy calculator](#) to see how much you use, you might be surprised.

The government has also set a target to reduce business demand for water by 9% by 2038 and 15% by 2050. We cannot meet this target alone and so, among others, will work collaboratively with businesses, water retailers (business only), local authorities and the Environment Agency to help businesses become more water efficient and to make sure all new commercial and industrial development is water efficient from the start.





## Demand for water

### Households

The local authority and Office for National Statistics (ONS) forecasts predict a 14.1% increase in population in our Berwick and Fowberry WRZ and an 11.7% increase in population in our Kielder WRZ by 2050. An average of 6,788 new homes are expected to be built each year.

We're predicting that customers will use less water in the future thanks to water meters and wanting to be careful with how much water they use as we become more aware of the effects of climate change.

The current levels of water use and our forecasts for 2050:

	Avg. litres used per person per day in 2021/22	Avg. litres used per person per day in 2050 forecast	Avg. litres used per person per day in 2050 after we implement our plan
<b>1 megalitre is 1 million litres</b>			
Customers with a water meter	141.40	126.89	100.62
Customers without a water meter	166.82	155.67	118.54

### Non-households (NHH's)

We forecast a significant increase in the amount of water used by businesses and industry over this period because of a growth of new businesses in the area, such as a Net Zero Teesside, a collection of industrial, power and hydrogen businesses, and two gigafactory power plants.

	Average megalitres used per day for all NHH's in 2021/22	Average megalitres used per day for all NHH's in 2050 forecast if we don't take any action now	Average megalitres used per day for all NHH's in 2050 after we implement our plan
<b>1 megalitre is 1 million litres</b>			
NHH's	130.57	191.12	162.39

# Reducing demand

## Water meters

The Environment Agency's long-term vision is for all households to have a water meter because they are an effective way to reduce water use.

By law we must install a meter for any customer who requests one. Being on a meter means you pay according to how much water you use, rather than by the rateable value of your property. Since 1990 all new homes have a water meter. We've seen a drop in customers requesting water meters during Covid-19 and might not meet our targets for 2025. Because we don't have a shortage of water supply in our region, compulsory metering is not part of our plan.

Our proposed metering strategy from 2025 is:

- To continue with an optant policy where the customer chooses whether they want a water meter, and to actively encourage customers to switch.
- To replace all existing household and business meters with smart meters by 2035.

**Smart water meters (like smart gas and electricity meters) are self-reading meters that help you keep track of how much water you're using and how much it costs.**

**They're not to be confused with pre-payment or pay-as-you-go-meters. When you know how much water you're using you can make responsible choices for yourself, your household, and your local community. They're a great way to reduce water demand and we've set ourselves a challenging target for all our meters to be smart by 2035.**

Any meter we replace or install as new going forward will be a smart meter and we are planning to replace all existing customer water meters with smart meters by 2035. Our leakage reduction and water saving work will reduce the amount of water that we will need to input into our network and will result in a surplus of water. Consequently, we have considered whether we can replace our smart meters over a longer time.



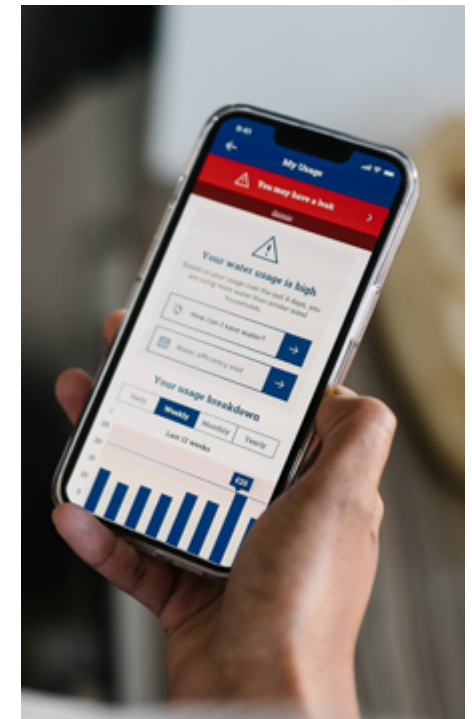
**We've set ourselves a challenging target for all our meters to be smart by 2035.**

However, we have concluded that this is not possible as smart meters are an important tool for reducing household water use and if we were to install fewer smart meters between 2025 and 2030, we would then not meet the government's interim targets for water use (122 litres per person per day by 31 March 2038).

Until then, we can drive by or walk by to read the meter meaning you will only be billed for how much you use. A manual read means we will only be able to read (and accurately bill) a few times a year compared to smart meters which send automatically. Once connected to a network the meter will send us readings automatically, using a secure network.

Over 2025-30 we're working hard to raise awareness of your right to a free meter\* and will be promoting the benefits of having a smart meter as a way of helping to reduce demand.

Our approach is known as whole area metering where we go into an area and install meters in existing boundary boxes outside customers' properties. The customer doesn't have to switch to a metered bill, but we'll send comparison information out after six months to show them how much they could save if they do.



\*In most cases the meter will be free unless you decide you want it to be in a different place to where we recommend.



### What are the advantages of a smart meter for me?

- Track your water usage on our app with hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly views.
- By saving water you reduce your carbon footprint and could also reduce your energy bills.
- Get an alert if there's a potential leak in your home.
- No more estimated bills.
- We don't need to visit your home to read your meter.

#### What customers said:

More than 70% of customers asked supported opt-in metering because it gives customers the choice and helps them detect leaks. It also gives more flexibility and puts customers in control, enabling people to save money and become more conscious of their usage.

As the cost of living and utility bills rise, we understand it's a difficult time for many.

There are many ways we can help you, from payment breaks and low-income discounts to capping your bill if you receive income-related benefits and have a medical condition that uses a lot of water or simply by giving advice on saving water which can help lower your energy bills too.

If you're struggling to pay your bills or falling into debt, please [get in touch](#).

#### Cutting edge trial

We've already been involved in exciting trials working with internet experts B4T and Welsh Water to fund an innovative trial in smart water metering which could help customers avoid large bills. B4T's Jellyfish device clips on to existing water meters, which are typically in underground chambers and do not easily connect to 4G, 5G or Wi-Fi. Jellyfish gets around this problem by connecting wirelessly over 0G helping to find leaks which helps to prevent damage to people's homes – and wallets. Preliminary results showed the device was 96% reliable, even from the most challenging of underground meter boxes.

## Promoting water efficiency

We have been coming up with innovative ways to encourage our customers to use water wisely for more than twenty years. So that we can all play our part in protecting our environment, we are aiming for customers to use 118 litres per person per day by 2040 (110 litres per person per day by 2050) but need your help to achieve this.

Every customer who commits to using less water helps us to reduce the amount of water that we will need to take from rivers, lakes and groundwater and treat at our treatment works. This means more water is retained in the environment and that we use less chemicals and energy, all of which is an environmental benefit too.

We have lots of ways to help you save water, energy, and money. From 2025-30 our plan is to help our customers to be more water efficient.

Using data, we can spot who our top 5% highest water users are. Those customers might not know they have a leak or there may be another reason they are using a lot of water.

There are many ways we can help from offering tailored advice and free water saving devices, to free repairs of leaking toilets and help finding leaks.

Our goal is to help them achieve genuine long-term water savings through behaviour change action. We can also offer these visits to customers who currently don't have a water meter installed and have a lot of people at home. Again, offering tailored advice to help them understand the many ways in which they can use less.

For more information on how you can save water [click here](#) or go to CCW's [website](#) for advice.

We'll continue to communicate the importance of identifying and repairing leaking toilets, taps and overflows. We can help you find a Water Safe plumber too. We'll also offer rebates to customers who install very low water using toilets.

We will offer a free repair of toilet leaks for our customers on an affordability tariff to support them with the cost of these repairs.

Working with house builders we want to install a device to the water meter that regulates the amount of water into the home without compromising any of the customer's appliances.

For customers living in blocks of flats or who own multiple properties we will have a dedicated team to liaise with homeowners, landlords and associations. Their job is to find and fix toilet leaks to eliminate the 5-8% of toilets that leak every day.

Our online educational resource aims to change the water use behaviours of future generations at a large scale. Known as "The Ripple Effect", this work will be adapted for Early Years, Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 as well as colleges and universities. "The Ripple Effect" isn't just focused on schools as the tool can be used by parents and community groups too. The content can be used towards eco school status, fun activities for after-school clubs as well as in Scout and Brownie groups.

We'll increase awareness about the impact to the environment, the effects of climate change and how they can become a water efficient generation. Our website is becoming a one stop online digital engagement platform for water efficiency and will provide customised advice, services, information, and guidance to change behaviour on a large scale.



**Did you know a leaking toilet can flush £200 a year down the drain?**

This platform will be accessible whenever you want to engage with us at times when your water consumption may change - whether that be moving home or having a baby - the platform will help you understand your water use and how that will impact our supply-demand balance on micro scale to support our wider plans.

We're also part of a nationwide campaign to support and increase awareness of water saving with support from Waterwise and all water companies.

#### **What customers said:**

Water saving devices was the second most supported option (behind leakage) amongst respondents (81% support). They feel this can be a positive solution as it will help save money and reduce their environmental impact.

Water saving devices/behaviours were supported by focus group respondents due to their potential to educate consumers to save water in the long term.



### Reducing leakage

In our draft WRMP24, we confirmed our target was to reduce leakage from our network by 50% by 2050. However, we have reviewed this and are now planning to reduce it by 55% by 2050.

We don't want to waste precious water through leakage, and we know this is important to our customers too. They especially want us to repair visible leaks quickly.

For 2020-25 some of our key projects have included:

- Investing in our systems and models. This allows us to get better at predicting how much water will be needed and how much water will be available. It means we have more confidence in knowing where water is being consumed. Smart water meters will significantly improve our understanding of how and when people use water and help us and our customers to find leaks more quickly.

- Installing pressure reducing valves which automatically adjust the pressure throughout the day, depending on the flow in the network. This minimises the excess pressure in an area, reducing the flow rates from customer taps and any leaks.
- Reducing leakage by looking at new ways to find and fix leaks using digital twins (virtual models that replicate our network), acoustic loggers (a little device that can 'listen' for leaks and alert us) and satellite surveys.

We talked to customers about why leakage occurs and how some of it comes from big bursts, largely due to extreme weather, but most of the leakage comes through tiny invisible leaks all along our vast network of pipes and are very hard to find.

Innovation will be a key. We're trialling new technology to help us find and fix leaks more quickly and have been awarded funding from the Ofwat Innovation Competition to help us do this.



**We will reduce leakage by 55% by 2050**

One of our biggest projects is the National Leakage Research Centre which will provide the facilities to accelerate new ideas in this space and help us towards our future goals.

A hydrophone is a microphone designed to be used underwater for recording or listening to underwater sound and we plan to permanently install these in our network. This will allow us to quickly identify when and where a leak has occurred on our network so that we can reduce the amount of water lost.

The pipes that connect your home to our network can also leak. These pipes are the customer's responsibility, although a lot of people don't know this.

We've already been involved in exciting trials working with a company called Origin who are developing a product called "No Dig" which will enable us to repair leaks from inside the pipes, reducing the need for digging up the road and disrupting traffic.

This groundbreaking product is a gel that can be pumped into the pipe, it will squeeze through any gaps to seal the surrounding ground and prevent water from escaping.

**Our customers told us:** Company side leak reduction had the highest support of all the options for our plan because it can be delivered quickly and that the amount of water saved is as large as possible.

74% of respondents supported customer side leak reduction too because it has the potential to reduce bills for customers and has low carbon impact.

We don't have any plans to reduce water pressure because there is only a finite number of areas where we can reduce pressure without compromising customer levels of service.



## Delivering our plans affordably

**We know that clean and clear water is a priority for our customers. The investment that Ofwat allows for these plans will help us to continue to provide this essential service long into the future, but the cost of investments will be added to customer bills.**

We know that this is a difficult time for customers with the current cost of living pressures that we are experiencing. Alongside our WRMP24 we continue to work hard to make sure that our bills remain affordable for all. We are proud to have the lowest water and wastewater bills in England.

There is a lot more that water companies need to do in the future than has been delivered in the past meaning we require a much larger investment across all areas of our business,

for example, meeting the Government's targets to reduce storm overflows will represent 'the largest infrastructure project to restore the environment in water company history'. (Storm overflows operate in times of heavy rainfall and act like a relief valve on the sewer network to protect homes from sewer flooding).

We are working hard with our partners to meet the challenge, but the scale of new work is substantial.

We have developed our plans with our customers in mind to manage the impact on customer bills while making sure there will be enough water in the region in the future.

We published our [draft Water Resources Management Plan](#) (dWRMP) for consultation between 18 November 2022 and 24 February 2023. In sharing these plans, we hoped to get as many views from our customers and stakeholders as possible to help develop our final plan.



**What is zero water poverty? We currently define water poverty as when a household spends more than 3% of its disposable income on water and sewerage charges.**

We also consulted on our draft PR24 Business Plan as a whole through our 'acceptability research programme' to give a more holistic view of the possible impact on bills across all services, so we can build future plans that meet those priorities and balance the need for investment with affordability.

Overall, the additional investment we need to address all the challenges in our plans means that, combined water and wastewater bills will need to rise by around a 17% impact on charges in the region by 2030.

As the cost of living and utility bills rise, we understand it's a difficult time for many. If you're struggling to pay your bills or falling into debt, please [get in touch](#).

There are many ways we can help you, from payment breaks and low-income discounts to advice on saving water which can help lower your energy bills too.



# Response to our consultation and publication of our final plan

## Thank you to everyone who responded to our draft WRMP24 consultation.

The consultation took place from 18 November 2022 to Friday 24 February 2023.

The consultation was open to all although Statutory Consultees included:

- The Secretary of State, Defra
- Ofwat
- Environment Agency
- Consumer Council for Water
- Natural England
- Local Authorities within our supply area
- National Park Authority
- English Heritage
- Navigation Authorities

We reviewed all the consultation responses and have used these to develop our final WRMP24. We prepared a consultation Statement of Response which confirms how we have taken account of each response.

Defra reviewed our Statement of Response and revised draft WRMP24 in Autumn 2023 and directed us to publish it as a final plan in August 2024.

The Statement of Response, our final WRMP and this customer summary document, can be found on our website [here](#).

