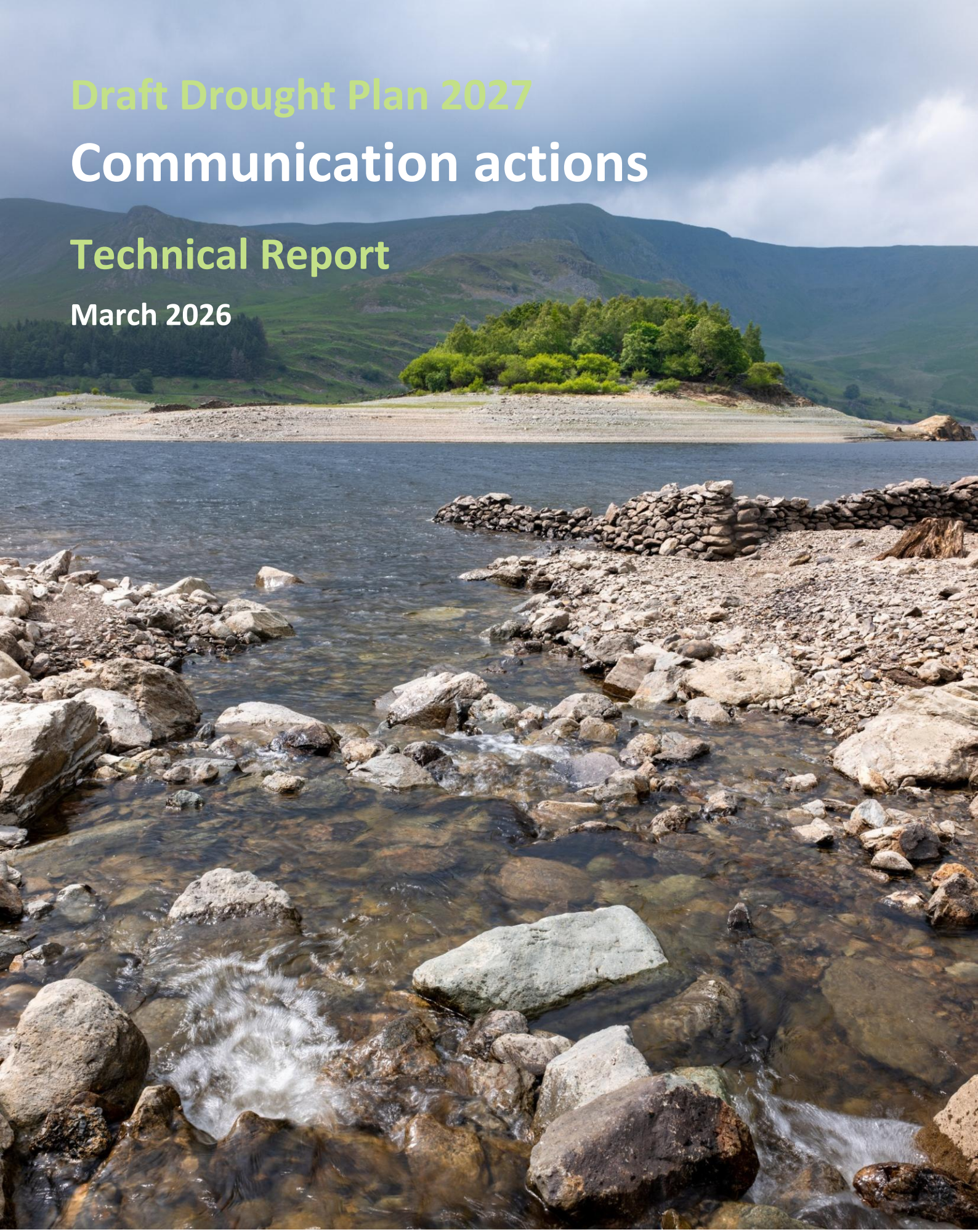


# Draft Drought Plan 2027

# Communication actions

## Technical Report

March 2026

United Utilities

Water for the North West

# Contents



## Appendices

# 1. Introduction

## Our drought communications strategy is developed and designed to do two things:

- **Keep customers, regulators, and key stakeholders informed about water resources in our region throughout the year.**
- **Encourage behavioural change amongst consumers by using positive messaging to promote water efficiency and reduce unnecessary use. This will help reduce consumption at critical times and in key geographical areas, which will contribute to improving our overall resource position and reducing the need for formal restrictions, such as a temporary use ban.**

We are committed to a clear, consistent, and transparent approach to drought communications and the implementation of any necessary restrictions. Our communication plan plays a critical role in how we engage with customers, regulators and stakeholders as part of our overall strategy for managing drought conditions. Lessons learned from previous dry weather and other incidents has strengthened our planning and helped us refine the way we communicate.

Our drought communication strategy sits within our broader, company-wide demand reduction programme, which aims to reduce water use across the region. A fundamental part of the demand reduction programme is our customer communications, supported by an 'always on' approach that helps customers understand how they can use water more efficiently and in turn saving customers money if metered. We have embedded the recommendations from the Drought Code of Practice (CoP)[1] by formally establishing the methods and frequency of communications between New Appointments and Variations (NAVs) and water retailers to ensure clear and cohesive communications during the implementation of future drought restrictions. This plan is linked to our Water Resources Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24)[2], which can be found on our website.

[1] UKWIR Drought Code of Practice (2023)

[2] Water Resources Management Plan 2024

# 2. Communications strategy and objectives

Our communication approach is focused on agility, based on a responsive, insight-driven method that allows us to adapt messaging and channels in real time based on drought severity, customer insight and campaign performance. At its core, agile communications are about staying informed, targeted, and adaptable. This approach, aligned to industry best practice (Figure 1), helps us make sure we are getting the right message to the right people, at the right time, and using the most appropriate channels to do it. This approach extends to regulators and key stakeholders, ensuring we maintain clear and proactive lines of communication through the provision of timely updates and briefings aligned to drought triggers and operational decisions to support transparency, collaboration, and coordinated action.

Our communication strategy is a multi-layered, multi-channel approach that is fully aligned to the UKWIR Drought Code of Practice (CoP) (2024) and wider industry best practice.

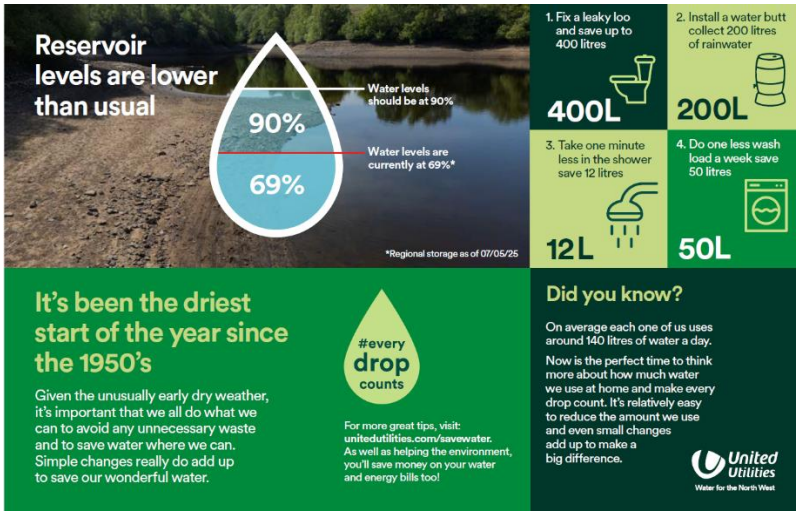
***Figure 1: Communications strategy***


Our communications strategy has evolved from previous drought plans, informed by best practice and lessons learned from our most recent dry weather events, the outcomes of water efficiency trials evaluating the effectiveness of demand reduction interventions, and insight-driven research with customers to better understand attitudes and motivations towards saving water.

Recent dry weather events include those in 2022 and 2025. While preparing this draft plan, the North West experienced a drought during the spring and summer of 2025. We have therefore taken the opportunity to incorporate early insights, alongside the lessons learned from 2022, to strengthen and refine our overall communication approach. Further information on our 2025 lessons learned is documented in our 'Lessons Learned' technical report.

During 2022, we escalated our water-saving campaigns early, ensuring customers were well informed about the water resources situation and encouraged customers to use water prudently to avoid the need for formal restrictions. This approach aligned with findings from the UKWIR report (2022), which highlighted effective customer communications as a critical drought demand management measure and an essential precursor to implementing a temporary use ban or more severe restrictions.[3] In 2025 as dry weather escalated, we took a similar approach, communicating our water resources position to the whole of our customer base, comparing actual reservoir levels against the more desirable average position, as shown in Figure 2.

***Figure 2: 2025 dry weather email and newspaper advert including our resometer***


[3] Review of 2022 Drought Demand Management Measures - Summary Report

# 3. Who we communicate with

In the event of prolonged dry weather or drought, we will communicate with customers, the wider community, regulators and a wide range of other stakeholders and interested parties. Based on our previous experience of dry weather events, together with the requirements of the water company drought plan guidance (2025)[4], we have compiled the following comprehensive list of who we need to keep informed and who are able to help us in meeting our demand reduction targets.

## Customers

- Customers, including both household and non-household
- Sensitive customers, in particular water users or those more vulnerable, such as Priority Service customers

## Media

- The general media, such as television and radio

## Business

- Business retailers with customers in our region
- Business organisations

## Government, regulators and organisations

### National

- Members of Parliament (MPs)
- Regulators, such as the Environment Agency (EA), Public Health England, Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)
- Independent customer groups, such as Consumer Council for Water (CCW)
- Other regulators and government departments, such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Ofwat and Welsh Government (as appropriate)

### Local/Regional

- Local Authorities
- Local Councillors
- Local Resilience Forums
- Other water companies, including NAVs
- Dee Consultative Committee
- Regional Water Resource Groups, such as Water Resources West (WRW)
- Other bodies (including emergency services i.e. fire and rescue and local authorities)
- Other stakeholders and groups (including environmental/ conservation, recreation, agricultural, local industry/power plant operators)

We will disseminate information to these key stakeholders during a drought as appropriate. We work with other relevant organisations to reinforce the message to save water and to help highlight the effect the drought is having on people and the environment (for example, wildlife habitats, gardens, rivers and lakes). Partnerships with some other organisations, such as the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), enable us to provide more expert advice on how customers can be water-efficient in a number of ways.

We will also engage with our neighbouring water companies via Water Resources West (WRW) regional planning group, to align our drought communications wherever appropriate. WRW's customer and stakeholder management group will support the members in the alignment of communications across WRW. This is described in more detail in the 'Water Resources West' technical report.

[4] Water company drought plan guideline, 2025 - GOV.UK

# 4. Co-ordinated communications

Co-ordinated communications across the sector, region and with other interest groups are important to maintain public trust and enhance transparency. In times of increased public interest such as drought, clear and consistent communication becomes even more critical. By aligning our messaging across internal teams, stakeholders, partners, and communication channels, we ensure that our voice remains unified and accurate, no matter who delivers the message or where it is received.

In the event that a drought affects customer supplies across three or more company areas, we are committed to supporting Water UK's role in coordinating communications through its operational incident management group. This includes contributing to the development and dissemination of consistent national messaging and engaging collaboratively with key stakeholders. This structured, joined-up approach ensures clarity and consistency across the sector and helps to maintain public confidence in how drought is managed.

This joined-up approach helps to avoid confusion, reduce misinformation, and reinforce key messages in a way that resonates with our audiences. It also ensures that customers are well-informed and confident in the actions we are taking, while empowering them to play their part through timely and practical advice. The benefit of effective co-ordination strengthens our relationship with the public, supports behaviour change, and helps us respond more efficiently and effectively to changing circumstances.

## 4.1 New Appointments and Variations (NAVs)

New Appointments and Variations (NAVs) operate under their own instrument of appointment granted by Ofwat and have a bulk supply agreement with us, under which we supply treated water to the NAV for distribution within their appointed area. While NAVs are legally responsible for providing water services to customers on their site, they rely on our network and supply for the source water.

In line with the UKWIR Drought CoP (2023)[1] recommendations for enhanced collaboration, we have strengthened our engagement with NAVs to ensure that any drought measures and communications are well coordinated and effectively implemented. Reflecting UKWIR's emphasis on early and transparent communication, we established fortnightly joint discussions with NAVs at the outset of the 2025 dry weather period. These meetings provided regular updates on our water resources position and outlined our proposed mobilisation plan for implementing potential restrictions, such as a temporary use ban. Additionally, we proactively provided NAVs with example communications to support a consistent approach for all affected customers.

During the 2025 drought, we engaged and agreed with the NAVs in our area that they would mirror the restrictions implemented by us, in line with the terms set out in the bulk supply agreement. Their Final Drought Plan 2027 will also align with our approach on demand restrictions, which will support coordinated activity during dry weather as part of our wider communications plan.

A fundamental principle of our approach is that NAV customers will not be subject to any restrictions or service variations that are not also being applied to our own direct customers. This ensures fairness and consistency in how drought measures are applied.

Communications with customers will be aligned to provide clear, consistent, and joint messaging where appropriate, helping all customers understand the situation and the actions being taken. Where practicable, we will adopt standardised wording for customer notices, such as those relating to temporary use bans or other restrictions, to promote clarity and ensure essential information is easy to understand. We will maintain proactive communication with NAVs to ensure they are fully informed of any planned restrictions and equipped to relay accurate, timely information to their customers. This collaborative approach extends to neighbouring water companies experiencing similar challenges, for example working collaboratively with colleagues in Yorkshire Water during Spring 2025 to spread messages about the impact of the dry weather, highlighted in particular by a spate of moorland fires on both sides of the Pennines.

In the event of a drought, we will work closely with NAVs to maintain supplies and manage demand. This may include reviewing and, if necessary, temporarily modifying the bulk supply arrangements, including volumes and

timing, to reflect operational constraints and supply availability. Any adjustments to the bulk supply will be made transparently and in line with pre-agreed terms, with full details provided on potential upward or downward variations or the application of annual limits. Where such changes are required, we will agree appropriate actions with the NAV to minimise customer impact and ensure continuity of service.

## 4.2 Other water companies

We will liaise with other water companies as appropriate with respect to bulk supply arrangements or actions that could affect them. In the event of us introducing water use restrictions, we will inform neighbouring water companies and discuss them with our regional group. The decision to impose water use restrictions for each water company ultimately depends on the water resource position of that company. We will work constructively with our regional group to ensure our drought management communications are consistent and we will participate in any national communication initiatives organised by Water UK.

## 4.3 Retailers

Water Supply Licensees (WSLs), also known as retailers, provide retail services such as billing, customer service, and meter reading. They can only serve non-household (mainly business) customers. Since WSLs do not manage water supply directly, they are affected indirectly through their customers. Therefore, any drought-related messaging or restrictions must be communicated to WSLs so they can inform and support their non-household customers appropriately.

Market Operator Services Limited (MOSL) - the market operator for the non-household water retail market in England - has published a new Drought Playbook[5] which can be referred to by MOSL and market stakeholders during drought events. The playbook sets out the information MOSL can provide during periods of drought and clarifies the roles and responsibilities of key market participants, including wholesalers, retailers, regulators, and Ofwat. The document provides relevant data sources to support effective decision-making and coordination across the market.

We have embedded the key recommendations from the Retailer Wholesaler Group (RWG) Water Efficiency sub-group on 'WRMP24: guidance for retailer involvement in water resources planning - Section 3: drought planning' into our drought communications plan when communicating with retailers (Table 2)[6]. The RWG provides a forum to share best practice to non-household customers and is supported by Market Operator Services Limited (MOSL). The recommendations include the importance of clear and timely engagement with water retailers to ensure potential impacts on business customers are fully considered during drought planning and response. We consult with retailers following the submission of our draft drought plan, providing opportunities for feedback on proposed demand and supply-side actions. This ensures our planning reflects potential implications for non-household customers and enables retailers to prepare accordingly.

Once a developing or escalating drought situation is identified, we notify relevant retailers promptly, sharing details of the conditions, the response process, and any potential restrictions under consideration. We do this through briefings dependent on drought status and updates of our water resources position via our website (Figure 4) supplemented by direct engagement with retailers, enabling them to keep their customers informed and supported. During the dry weather experienced in 2025, we attended the regular RWG drought meetings to provide updates to retailers and MOSL, so that they could update their dashboard.

We provide communication materials for non-household customers to the retailers where appropriate and share these messages to the non-household customers. For example, during the 2025 drought, we proactively provided retailers with example communications to support a consistent messaging approach for all affected non-household customers.

[5] MOSL Drought Playbook

[6] WRMP24: guidance for retailer involvement in water resources planning (RWG, 2021)

In line with the Market Codes which govern the non-household retail market, specifically the Wholesale-Retail Code (Schedule 1, Part 3, Operational Terms, E6)[7], we follow established communication protocols to ensure our engagement with retailers is consistent, coordinated, and compliant with industry standards. While the codes allow us to request that retailers share reasonable messages with customers, they do not prescribe the timing, content, or format of those messages. Therefore, we work collaboratively with our retailers to agree the most effective approach to communications, ensuring consistency and clarity.

Should any formal restrictions be proposed, such as a non-essential use ban, we notify retailers in advance and keep them informed throughout, including any changes to the scope or timing of such measures. Retailers are expected to follow reasonable instructions regarding communications with their customers and inform us within one business day of any breaches they identify.

To further strengthen our approach, we are actively contributing to the development of the 'Drought Communications Good Practice Guide', led by the RWG. Through this industry-wide collaboration, we are sharing lessons learned and best practice to help shape clear, coordinated communication processes across wholesalers, retailers, and NAVs. This work supports our aim of improving the clarity, timing, and alignment of drought-related messaging for non-household customers, ensuring we are well-prepared for future events.

## 4.4 Environmental regulators and independent customer groups

In developing and implementing the plan, we will liaise with the EA, CCW and other bodies on water conservation messaging and promotion during drought events. This may involve collaborating on joint communications or announcements, where appropriate, to help raise the profile and consistency of the messages, demonstrate consensus of the need for water saving actions and how that can positively affect the impact this is having on the wider environment.

There will be close dialogue in relation to the need for any water use restrictions on the community, protecting supplies to minimise the risk to the environment and ensure security of supply. This will ensure that the response and communications consider their feedback. During normal conditions we hold regular liaison meetings with our environmental regulators to discuss water resource issues at various management levels.

In a developing drought situation, a United Utilities / Natural England / EA Drought Technical Liaison Group is formed. If any of our sources in Wales are affected by the drought, this group will be extended to include Natural Resources Wales. As the drought develops a further group is created of directors from both United Utilities and the EA. These groups will meet to ensure:

- A clear line of communication is maintained between us and the EA
- A consistent application of policy across the company area by us and the EA
- Any actions agreed by the liaison groups represent corporate decisions
- An ongoing review of our Drought Action Plan developed for the specific drought event including stakeholder communications.

The frequency of liaison with environmental regulators changes as a drought develops, as shown in Table 1.

We will engage with regulators through the National Drought Group (NDG), convened by the EA, to discuss communication and drought management activities.

If appropriate we will engage Natural England and Natural Resources Wales at an early stage as the drought develops, particularly for sources within or upstream of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and / or a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and also in general for non-designated sites. During a drought, we will review the existing environmental monitoring arrangements for drought permit/order sites with our environmental regulators.

[7] MOSL Market Codes

In a drought we will also establish a Multi-Agency Drought Group. This will comprise senior managers from United Utilities, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, the Canal and River Trust and others as appropriate.

## 4.5 Other regulators and government

We will provide regular and timely updates to Defra as a drought situation develops. Such updates will include details of available water resources and measures taken to conserve reservoir storage and reduce demand. We will also attempt to provide Defra with as much notice as possible of any drought order applications.

We will ensure that we keep the DWI, Ofwat, CCW, and the Welsh Government informed of the drought situation. Customer communications and issues will be discussed in detail with CCW.

MPs and councillors are encouraged to share consistent messaging with their communities (via newsletters, social media, local press) through information sharing and co-ordination.

## 4.6 Regional water resource groups

We are part of the regional planning group Water Resources West (WRW). There are several established initiatives where WRW works closely together to align communications, such as developing the Code of Practice on Water Use Restrictions and adopting a consistent form of notice for temporary use bans. This is described in more detail in the 'Water Resources West' technical report.

## 4.7 Other bodies

Communication with the Fire Service will be maintained through normal liaison channels at drought level 3.

During periods of dry weather, when water levels may affect the sources that support Canal and River Trust waterways, or when our own supplies could be influenced by their operations, we will work closely with them to understand any potential impacts and agree appropriate management actions. This collaboration helps ensure that public water supply needs and the needs of those who use Canal and River Trust waterways, including boat users, are carefully considered and well managed during drought conditions

Our normal communication channels will be maintained with Local Authorities, Local Councillors and Public Health England, and briefings on the drought situation will be provided as necessary. In the event of an application for a drought order to prohibit non-essential uses of water, we will contact these organisations to explain the need for the restrictions and any mitigation measures that we are taking.

### 4.7.1 Dee Consultative Committee

We are a member of the Dee Consultative Committee. If storage in the River Dee regulation reservoirs falls to the drought action level, a meeting of the Committee will take place to discuss the introduction of drought alleviation measures as enshrined in the Dee General Directions. The Committee will continue to meet on a regular basis during a drought to review the sustainable operation of the River Dee regulation scheme.

### 4.7.2 Local stakeholders

The environmental studies that we have undertaken for the drought permit / order sites included in this plan, were carried out in consultation with regulators (EA, Natural Resources Wales and Natural England, where appropriate) as well as local interested organisations and individuals. Through this process we have developed a database of local contacts, and their involvement in the drought planning process ensures that they are better informed regarding any future proposals for actual drought permit / order applications that may be required.

### 4.7.3 Local Resilience Forums

Emergency planning groups such as Local Resilience Forums bring together several interested parties by county. From drought level 2 and as a drought develops, we will work with Local Resilience Forums under the Civil

Contingencies Act (2004)[8] and the Security and Emergency Measures Direction (2024)[9] to share information on potential impacts on communities and important infrastructure, as well as implementation of emergency supply plans for the distribution of safe water.

[8] Civil Contingencies Act 2004

[9] The Security and Emergency Measures (Water and Sewerage Undertakers and Water Supply Licensees) (Amendment and revocation) Direction 2024

# 5. How and when we will communicate

This section of the document sets out the communication plan that we would enact at different stages of drought to ensure timely communication with customers, regulators and stakeholders from the onset of a drought, throughout its duration, and during the post-drought recovery phase.

As a period of dry weather evolves, the importance of clear and timely information exchange between customers, regulators and stakeholders will increase. Our communication approach focuses on proactive engagement, transparency, and consistency, ensuring that customers, regulators and stakeholders receive accurate and up-to-date information at every stage, including the present situation and future risks. Drought levels play a critical role in this process, acting as structured decision points that guide both operational actions and the corresponding communications.

Drought levels serve two primary functions within our drought response strategy:

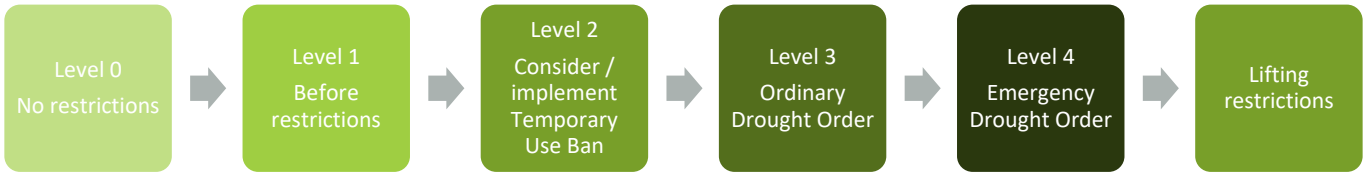
- Indicating water resource status: they provide a clear and consistent representation of the current water resource position, allowing us to monitor emerging risks and trends effectively.
- Triggering drought management actions: they act as operational triggers for implementing appropriate drought management measures, ensuring that actions are taken in line with pre-defined levels of service to customers.

These levels initiate corresponding communication activities, aligned with the nature and scale of the drought level. This structured approach ensures that customers, regulators and stakeholders are informed at the right time, with clear messaging tailored to the current situation.

Such actions and associated communications include early warnings and preparedness messaging, clear guidance on any restrictions and water-saving measures during the drought, and ongoing updates on recovery efforts and the return to normal operations. By maintaining open channels of communication, we aim to support customer understanding, encourage responsible water use, and reinforce trust in our management of water resources.

Drought status levels are referenced in both the UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR) Drought CoP (2023)[1] and the Environment Agency's Water Company Drought Plan Guidance. The CoP presents a flowchart (Figure 3) sequencing the phased implementation of restrictions, which broadly aligns with the EA's drought status framework. It includes an additional stage - the lifting of restrictions, which, while not formally recognised as a drought status level, is a key consideration for customer communication and engagement as drought conditions ease. These communication phases and how we will communicate at each stage are further detailed in the following section.

***Figure 3: Drought levels - before, during and after restrictions***




## 5.1 Year-round water efficiency communications

Our year-round communications during normal operation focus on keeping customers informed of our water resources position via our website (Figure 4) and promoting water efficiency through an 'always-on' strategy (details of campaigns, messaging tactics, and outcomes achieved from our 2020-2025 demand reduction programme is provided in Appendix A). This is designed to build awareness, encourage long-term behavioural change, and support reductions in household consumption. We communicate separately with non-household customers who have leakage or high consumption to help reduce business demand, but all other communications will be through the

retailer unless they grant us permission to directly contact the non-household customer. To reduce household demand, we use seasonal messaging across multiple channels, linking water-saving to both environmental benefits and financial savings. It's this consistent platform, coupled with specific action-driven activity and campaigns that influence long-term behaviour change.

***Figure 4: Reservoir levels all year-round communications***

# Reservoir levels

Current reservoir levels are shown below and are updated once a week. The date shows the week ending (always a Sunday) of when the readings were taken. We try to put them here by the following Wednesday, but it can take a little bit longer if there has been a bank holiday. Please note we provide these to give a snapshot of the previous week's storage in our reservoirs. The Environment Agency website provides current river levels, flood warning and flood risk forecasts, and should be referred to when assessing potential flooding.

| 20th July 2025 | Actual stock | Change since last week | Average year | Last year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regional Total | 63.1% | -0.1% | 74.7% | 80.4% |
| Carlisle | 96.6% | -1.0% | 83.7% | 94.6% |
| Haweswater & Thirlmere | 61.0% | 0.7% | 64.6% | 79.5% |
| Pennine Sources | 42.2% | -1.7% | 70.3% | 78.2% |
| Dee & Vyrnwy Reservoirs | 76.9% | 0.4% | 82.7% | 82.0% |

| | |
|---|---|
| Water level at Thirlmere (metres below top water level) | 5.37 |

## 5.2 Drought levels and communication actions

This plan sets out the drought levels (see Section 2.2 in our 'United Utilities Draft Drought Plan' report) we use as decision points to guide our selection of appropriate drought actions. Table 1 sets out which regulators and stakeholders we will contact at each drought level. Organisations will only be contacted if drought actions relevant to their interests are being considered.

***Table 1: Organisations that we may contact following the crossing of drought levels (managed using incident management procedures to confirm ownership of activity as appropriate)***

| Group | Organisation | Regulators and stakeholders contacted by drought level | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 |
| Regulators/ Government | Environment Agency | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Natural England | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Natural Resources Wales | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Ofwat | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Water UK | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| Group | Organisation | Regulators and stakeholders contacted by drought level | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 |
| | Drinking Water Inspectorate / Public Health England | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Consumer Council for Water | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Defra | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| National Park Authorities | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Neighbouring water companies | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Water company in receipt of a bulk export | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| New Appointments and Variations (NAVs) | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Water Retailers | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Licenced suppliers operating in our area | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Local Authorities, elected representatives and Resilience Forums | Local MPs | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Department for Communities and Local Government | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Local Authorities | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Combined Authorities | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | County Councils | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Local Resilience Forums | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Navigation authorities | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Fire service | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Local environmental organisations and stakeholder interest groups including local businesses | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Table 2 outlines our phased approach to drought communications, detailing how and when we will communicate changes in drought status, alongside the corresponding actions we will take to manage the situation. We apply a Green, Amber and Red status system to guide the escalation of communications throughout each stage of a drought.

- Green status is used during the Enhanced Monitoring and Operations phase, signalling the need for early messaging to encourage demand reduction.
- Amber and Red statuses are activated from drought level 1 onward and continue through levels 2, 3, and 4. As a situation escalates, communications become progressively stronger in terms of messaging tone, frequency, and reach.

This framework allows us to scale our response appropriately. By applying the agile communications approach outlined in section 6.1, we can adapt our messaging in real time to reflect changing drought conditions and customer needs.

***Table 2: Communication action plan***

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Normal operation** | Customer (Household & Non-household) | 1. Business as usual communications.<br>2. Ongoing water efficiency programme.<br>3. Direct messages to high consumption and leakage customers.<br>4. Provide consumption visibility to ARM/AMI metered customers to raise general awareness regarding water consumption with hints and tips on ways to save (seasonal message and general water efficiency communications). | "Let's all save water" | Email<br>Company website<br>Radio adverts<br>TV<br>Social media<br>SMS | Not applicable |
| **Enhanced monitoring and operations** | Customer (Household & Non-household) | 1. Enhanced water efficiency communications. | "The weather has been drier than normal, and reservoirs are lower than we'd like for the time of year"<br>"You can help by saving water where you can around the home and garden"<br>"We have lots of ways to help you save water and money – get your free water saver's pack"<br>"If you spot a leak when out and about, please report it to us" | Email<br>Company website<br>Radio adverts<br>TV<br>Social media<br>SMS | Not applicable |
| | Regulators | 1. Inform regulators. | "We have crossed our Enhanced Monitoring and Operations curve. We are taking required actions in line with our drought plan." | Email | Not applicable |
| **Level 1** | Customer (Household & Non-household) | 1. Campaign for voluntary use restraint to encourage customers to use less | "The weather has been drier than normal, and reservoirs are lower than we'd like for the time of year" | Email<br>Company website | Not applicable |

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | water and further enhancement of water efficiency communications.<br><br>2. Increase region-wide messaging across the general media and radio sponsorship, social media messaging and direct messages.<br><br>3. Plan behavioural change campaigns (individual incentive tests, community incentive test). | "Please do what you can to use less – there are many ways to save"<br><br>"The weather continues to be drier than normal, and this is now impacting the environment and our ability to keep water flowing for everyone"<br><br>"Act now by only using what you need for essential purposes to avoid restrictions"<br><br>"Only use what you need in the home and garden" | Targeted text messaging<br><br>Radio adverts<br><br>TV<br><br>Social media<br><br>SMS | |
| | Regulators | 1. Inform regulators.<br><br>2. Establish regular liaison meeting with regulators. | "We have crossed our drought level 1 curve. We are taking required actions in line with our drought plan. We are:<br><br>1. Implementing drought management actions to manage the possible risk of drought<br><br>2. Undertaking increased assessments of the current water resources situation." | Email<br><br>Liaison meetings | Not applicable |
| | Stakeholders (NAVs and Retailers) | 1. Inform NAVs and retailers of the water resources position and pro-longed dry weather.<br><br>2. Call to action encouraging sharing water efficiency messages/increasing communications with customers to reduce any unnecessary water use.<br><br>3. Co-ordinating communications by including a copy of direct domestic (HH) and NHH customer messaging for them to use (we will circulate the NHH customer messages). | Direct domestic customer and NHH customer email example:<br><br>"You can see the levels of the reservoir that serves your area at this link"<br><br>"There's also a lot more information on water saving here on the CCW podcast (linked) and you can find more at Save water \| United Utilities"<br><br>"Conserving water where you can not only help the local environment but saves money on your water and energy bills too" | Email<br><br>Liaison meetings i.e. RWG drought group (retailers) | Not applicable |

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4. Update on the actions we have been taking to safeguard water supplies and protect the environment, for example operational changes, utilising existing abstraction permits and promoting water efficiency messaging. Customer insight and engagement is a foundational element of our water efficiency strategy. Our 'always-on' activities create awareness and appreciation of the true value of water. Complimented by Ofwat's Water Efficiency Campaign (WEC), the campaign is delivered through a multi-layered, multi-channel approach, example channels might include radio, ITV weather sponsorship in the Granada and Border regions, social and digital media and direct communications to household customers (email and text). We work collaboratively with business retailers to agree the approach to communicating with non-household customers | | | |
| **Level 2** | Customer (Household & Non-household) | 1. Remind customers to continue saving water through voluntary use restraint, as early interventions need to be followed up and reinforced with later messaging, due to behaviour 'fade' because short term actions must | "United Utilities Water Limited gives notice that, pursuant to Sections 76 and 76A–C of the Water Industry Act 1991, the following uses of water supplied by United Utilities Water Limited are restricted."<br><br>"From [insert start date], a hosepipe ban will come into effect across our region due to ongoing dry weather and high demand for water. | At least two local newspapers<br><br>Company website<br><br>Regional publication<br><br>Social media<br><br>Text and email messaging | 2-5 days (temporary use ban notice period) |

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | be contextualised in long-term actions.[10]<br><br>2. Statutory powers to introduce a Temporary Use Ban to restrict water use by customers with an extensive communications campaign. We will forecast the timescale for introducing a temporary use ban and use agile communications to delay the introduction of a temporary use ban.<br><br>3. Introduction of a temporary use ban as appropriate. To meet legislative requirements, the TUB notice will be published in at least two newspapers in the local area to which is it to apply and on our website.<br><br>2. The TUB notice will be issued to customers before restrictions begin. This notification marks the start of a three-week representation period, during which customers can submit requests for exceptions. Customers must comply with restrictions from the implementation date unless confirmed otherwise. With respect to inclusivity, we will advertise the notice widely to maximise the proportion of customers reached, such as regional publications, social media platforms i.e. Facebook and Instagram, text and email messaging and radio stations, for | This means you'll need to temporarily stop certain non-essential water activities, including:<br><br>- Using a hosepipe to water gardens or plants<br><br>- Filling or maintaining paddling pools or swimming pools<br><br>- Washing vehicles with a hosepipe<br><br>- Cleaning windows or patios using a hosepipe<br><br>These restrictions will help us protect water supplies for everyone, especially for essential daily needs like drinking, cooking, and hygiene.<br><br>We understand this may be inconvenient, but these steps are necessary to manage our water resources carefully during this period of exceptional demand and below-average rainfall.<br><br>What happens next?<br><br>The ban will be legally enforceable from [insert start date], and we will be working with customers to raise awareness and encourage compliance.<br><br>How you can help:<br><br>We're asking everyone to start preparing now - please avoid topping up pools, delay vehicle cleaning, and check for any unnecessary water use at home."<br><br>"Please visit our website or contact us via email if you feel you should be exempt from these restrictions" | Radio adverts<br><br>Letter<br><br>TV<br><br>SMS | |

[10] Review of the research and scientific understanding of drought: summary report, Environment Agency's Chief Scientist's Group - GOV.UK

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | example Heart, to reach a larger audience. | | | |
| | Regulators | 1. Inform regulators.<br><br>2. Increase frequency of liaison meetings with regulators. | "We have crossed our drought level 2 curve. We are taking required actions in line with our drought plan. We are undertaking:<br><br>1. Assessments of the current water resources situation.<br><br>2. Updates on the actions we are taking (including water use restrictions and drought permit / order applications if appropriate." | Email<br><br>Liaison meetings | Not applicable |
| | Stakeholders (NAVs and Retailers) | 1. Inform NAVs and retailers of the water resources position and pro-longed dry weather.<br><br>2. Call to action encouraging sharing water efficiency messages/increasing communications with customers to reduce any unnecessary water use.<br><br>3. Co-ordinating communications by including a copy of direct domestic (HH) and NHH customer messaging for them to use (we will circulate the NHH customer messages).<br><br>Update on the actions we have been taking to safeguard water supplies and protect the environment, for example operational changes, utilising existing abstraction permits and promoting water efficiency messaging through our sponsorship of the ITV weather. | Direct domestic customer and NHH customer email example prior to a TUB implementation:<br><br>"Please help save and reuse water - we have started to see some rain but water levels in the North West's rivers, lakes, groundwaters and reservoirs are currently much lower than average for this time of year – you can check your reservoir levels here (link)" | Email<br><br>Liaison meetings<br><br>Convene a meeting for briefings ahead of any restrictions<br><br>Letter | 1-2 week prior to a temporary use ban notice press release |

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4. Inform NAVs and retailers in advance of a TUB implementation (see example messaging in customer section). | | | |
| **Level 3** | Customer (Household & Non-household) | 1. Statutory powers to further restrict water use under a Non-Essential Use Ban i.e. car washing.<br><br>2. Apply for and introduce a drought order to restrict non-essential use and introduce a non-essential use ban.<br><br>3. This brings in greater restrictions to customers, particularly non-household customers. Notification of drought orders will be available on our website in a short pdf format including information of activities that are prohibited, as well as published and circulated within the geographical area where restrictions will be implemented. The notice will include statutory exceptions and the few non-statutory exceptions and bespoke exceptions.<br><br>4. As a drought progresses through Level 3, we will implement further demand and supply drought management actions to reduce the likelihood of reaching drought Level 4.<br><br>5. Examples of extreme demand management actions are increased frequency and severity of media and communications to customers, the | "We have crossed into level 3 and we are taking further action to protect water supplies"<br><br>"A hosepipe ban is still in place"<br><br>Extreme drought actions -<br><br>"Urgent: Help Us Protect Water Supplies During Ongoing Drought Conditions<br><br>Due to the continued dry weather and exceptionally high demand for water, we're now taking further steps to protect our water supplies and ensure there's enough for everyone.<br><br>We've already introduced a hosepipe ban, which includes restrictions such as not using hosepipes for watering gardens, washing vehicles, or filling paddling pools. From [insert date], we are removing previous exceptions to these restrictions. This means that all customers who were exempt under statutory, non-statutory and bespoke exceptions are now asked to stop outdoor hosepipe use until further notice.<br><br>We understand this may be inconvenient, but it's essential to reduce pressure on the network and protect supplies for essential use, such as drinking, cooking, and hygiene.<br><br>We're also stepping up support for customers by offering help with identifying and fixing leaks on your property. If you think you may have a leak, | At least two local newspapers<br><br>Company website<br><br>Regional publication<br><br>Social media<br><br>Text and email messaging<br><br>Radio adverts<br><br>Letter<br><br>TV<br><br>SMS | Non-essential use ban - Potentially 28 days from date of application to implementation. During this time there will have been the legal notice served and representation period for objections.<br><br>Lead in time for more extreme drought actions, such as removal of TUBs exceptions – minimum 1 week notice period. |

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | removal of TUB exceptions and enabling customer side leak repairs. | please get in touch - we may be able to assist with a free or subsidised repair." | | |
| | Regulators | 1. Inform regulators: provide updates on the situation in regard to the TUB and drought permit applications<br><br>2. Establish weekly update meeting with regulators. | "We have crossed our drought level 3 curve. We are taking required actions in line with our drought plan. We are undertaking:<br><br>1. Assessments of the current water resources situation.<br><br>2. Updates on the actions we are taking (including water use restrictions and drought permit / order applications if appropriate" | Email<br><br>Liaison meetings | Not applicable |
| | Stakeholders (NAVs and Retailers) | 1. Inform NAVs and retailers of the deteriorating water resources position and remind them that the TUB and any drought permits are still implemented<br><br>2. Inform NAVs and retailers in advance of a Non-Essential Use Ban (NEUB) implementation | Direct domestic customer and NHH customer email example prior to a NEUB implementation:<br><br>"Please continue to help save and reuse water - we may need to implement further restrictions to business customers that will prohibit non-essential uses of water to conserve our water resources - you can check your reservoir levels here (link)" | Email<br><br>Increase frequency of liaison meetings as appropriate<br><br>Convene a meeting for briefings ahead of any restrictions | 1-2 week prior to a NEUB notice press release |
| **Level 4** | Customers, Regulators and Stakeholders | 1. Statutory powers to further restrict water use with greater impact to customers.<br><br>2. Communications will be held separately in our Emergency Drought Response Plan. | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| **Lifting Restrictions** | Customer (Household & Non-household) | 1. De-escalating restrictions and activities such as a TUB and NEUB during drought recovery.<br><br>2. De-escalate the tone of our communications. In this way, customers will be kept aware of the | "Water use restrictions lifted - Thank you for your support<br><br>We're pleased to let you know that, following recent improvements in water resources and reduced demand, we are now lifting the Temporary | At least two local newspapers<br><br>Company website<br><br>Regional publication | Day of revoking the restriction(s) notice |

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | drought status right up to and including the point that it ends. Crucially, our communications on water saving will not stop. As outlined in our agile communications methodology, our communications will move into Business as Usual (BAU) and will contribute to reducing our per capita consumption. | Use Ban (TUB)/Non-Essential Use Ban (NEUB) that has been in place since [insert date]. This means you can now resume activities such as using hosepipes for gardening, washing vehicles, and other previously restricted uses.<br><br>We want to sincerely thank all customers for your patience, understanding, and efforts to use water wisely during this period. Your support made a real difference in helping to protect supplies, particularly for vulnerable customers and essential services.<br><br>While restrictions have ended, we're still encouraging everyone to continue using water responsibly, especially as weather patterns remain unpredictable. Water is a precious resource, and small changes in how we use it can have a big impact in building resilience for the future.<br><br>We'll keep monitoring water levels and will continue investing in long-term improvements to our water network." | Social media (Atkins study demand measures 2022)<br><br>Text and email messaging<br><br>Radio adverts<br><br>Letter<br><br>TV<br><br>SMS | |
| | Regulators | 1. De-escalating restrictions and activities such as a TUB and NEUB during drought recovery.<br><br>2. Similarly, we will communicate with regulators using the actions set out in the table above as our process. This will slowly de-escalate the drought, keeping regulators appraised as we cross through each subsequent level. | "We are seeing recovery in our water resources position and are reviewing demand restriction activities as appropriate. We will seek to initiate lessons learnt reviews with our regulators upon crossing our Enhanced Monitoring and Operations curve. Meeting frequency and attendees will be reviewed upon crossing each drought level during the recovery period." | Email<br><br>Liaison meetings | Not applicable |

| Drought level | Audience | Drought activity | What we will communicate to customers (example messaging) | How we will communicate (communication channels) | Lead-in times before any drought management actions commence to allow for the relevant communications to take place |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Stakeholders (NAVs and Retailers) | 1. De-escalating restrictions and activities such as a TUB and NEUB during drought recovery.<br><br>2. Similarly, we will communicate with stakeholders using the actions set out in the table above as our process. This will slowly de-escalate the drought, keeping stakeholders appraised as we cross through each subsequent level.<br><br>3. We will share direct HH and NHH customer messaging prior to a TUB or NEUB revocation (see example in customer section). | "We are seeing recovery in our water resources position and are reviewing demand restriction activities as appropriate. We will seek to initiate lessons learnt reviews with our stakeholders upon crossing our Enhanced Monitoring and Operations curve. Meeting frequency and attendees will be reviewed upon crossing each drought level during the recovery period." | Email<br><br>Increase frequency of liaison meetings as appropriate<br><br>Convene a meeting for briefings ahead of any restrictions | 1-2 week in advance of notice revocation |

## 5.3 Enhanced Monitoring and Operations

During enhanced monitoring and operations, we will continue to deliver enhanced water efficiency communications and move to 'let's all save' status prior to reaching level 1.

We will also start to configure our supply system to manage the risk of possible drought. This may involve temporarily changing customers usual water supply source resulting in a change in taste. Before any changes are made we will proactively communicate these to customers.

## 5.4 Level 1

At drought level 1 we will begin to increase communications to customers, regulators and stakeholders due to the prolonged dry weather and increased risk of drought. We will ask our stakeholders and regulators to support us in sharing water efficiency messages with customers; including direct domestic and non-household customer messaging that we intend to use. In these customer communications, we will include the actions we have been taking to safeguard water supplies and protect the environment, such as finding and fixing leaks.

We will circulate weekly update reports to our regulators and undertake telephone conferences with a Multi-Agency Drought Group comprising senior managers from United Utilities, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Canal and River Trust and others as appropriate.

## 5.5 Level 2

At drought level 2, we will continue to reinforce the messaging of 'act now to avoid' to either delay or remove the need to introduce a temporary use ban. Being agile allows us to adjust communications by both county and local water source to actively target the hearts and minds of customers to reduce their water use. This gives the opportunity to land the core messages both regionally, through TV / radio / social media, alongside localised versions via email, letters and partners, so we can maximise the benefits from our communications.

We will consider the most appropriate time to introduce a temporary use ban. This is the formal legal term for what has traditionally been known as a 'hosepipe ban'[11]. However, the term "hosepipe ban" remains widely recognised and understood by customers, the media, and wider community. We may refer to "hosepipe bans" in customer-facing and public communications (Table 1 example messaging) and will use the term "temporary use ban" in formal legal contexts, such as within the published notice itself.

Our drought communications strategy is designed to be both agile and evidence-based, ensuring that the timing of temporary use bans is as effective as possible in reducing demand while maintaining public trust and engagement. There are a range of factors that will be considered to determine the most appropriate and impactful time to introduce a temporary use ban such as:

- Optimal temperature patterns: evidence suggests hot / dry periods (June-July) yield greater benefit; so, we will use historical demand patterns to anticipate the likelihood of temperature peaks. Temporary use bans are intended to reduce discretionary use, which is predominantly external water use in summer related to weather patterns.
- Customer acceptance: UKWIR (2022)[12] recommend that effective customer communication is an essential precursor to a temporary use ban and any other more severe restrictions. This highlights the importance of allowing sufficient time for customers to act on voluntary use restraint measures and for assessing their impact before proceeding with formal restrictions.
- High demand: we will estimate a peak demand period based on historical data, alongside temperature as mentioned above.

[11] The change in terminology came into effect with the Flood and Water Management Act (2010)[11], which introduced the broader and more flexible temporary use ban framework.

[12] Review of 2022 Drought Demand Management Measures - Summary Report

This approach ensures we remain ready to implement a temporary use ban without unnecessary delay while preserving the opportunity for voluntary measures to succeed. It also strengthens the longer-term effectiveness of water efficiency messaging, by maintaining customer trust and engagement throughout the drought response.

When a temporary use ban notice is published, the accompanying customer communications will cover the following details (see 'Demand actions' technical report, Appendix A, for an example of a formal temporary use ban notice):

- The reasons for the restriction
- The need to comply to conserve water
- Details of the restriction
- Explanation of the actions being taken to protect water supplies, and,
- Details of any exceptions available to customers

Although legislation does not set a minimum notice period for temporary use bans, we will provide customers with sufficient time to prepare. Typically, we will give 2–5 days' notice, depending on prevailing conditions. This approach maintains flexibility while ensuring reasonable preparation time. Statutory and discretionary exceptions will apply, and customers will have three weeks from the notice date to apply for an exception

We will publish a temporary use ban notice in at least two newspapers circulating in the local area to which is it to apply and, on our website, in accordance with legislation. It will be available on our website as a short formal notice in pdf format for customers to download for ease of access. We will also broaden our communication to other platforms to maximise the proportion of customers reached, as shown in Table 2.

The representation period will begin on the date the temporary use ban notice is issued (via press release) and will remain open for three weeks. We will allow three weeks from the date of the legal notice to give a reasonable period of time for representations for temporary use ban exceptions to be made. Customers must comply with restrictions from the implementation date unless they are exempt ('Demand actions' technical report, Table 3).

We have a well-established and robust process for reviewing and responding to customer exception requests in a fair and consistent manner, with clearly defined steps for escalation and enforcement where necessary. Acknowledging the likelihood of increased customer engagement during drought restrictions, we have enhanced our approach to ensure that all communications are timely, clear, and accessible. Our drought management response measures are fully scalable, and we are prepared to deploy additional resources as required to effectively manage exception requests. To support this, a dedicated customer information line will be in operation, alongside our usual communication channels, to respond to queries and facilitate the exception process.

Key measures in place include:

- Proactive communication to customers during the notice period in advance of the implementation of a temporary use ban
- Providing details as to how customers can apply for an exception
- Clear, detailed information available on our website, including a customer-friendly FAQ section aligned with the UKWIR Drought CoP (2023)[1]
- An online postcode checker to allow customers to easily determine if they are affected
- Direct, proactive communication to all Priority Services customers, and;
- Targeted communications to non-household customers who made representations during previous droughts

We include clear lead-in times for all drought communications activities before any restrictions come into force, ensuring that all customer groups are informed in good time and can prepare accordingly.

## 5.6 Level 3

Upon reaching drought level 3, we will consider the most appropriate time to introduce further restrictions, such as a non-essential use ban through an ordinary drought order application. A non-essential use ban affects both

household and non-household customers, though business customers (non-household) may be affected more by a drought order which prohibits non-essential uses of water, such as car washing and window cleaning. In the event of an application for such power, we will discuss the measures with CCW and organisations representing businesses in our region to discuss ways we can minimise any adverse impacts that taking such measures may have on them.

In accordance with Schedule 8, paragraph 3(c) of the WRA 1991, a water company is required to publish a notice when applying for a Drought Order to restrict water use. This notice must explain that any objections to the application can be submitted to the Secretary of State within seven days of the notice being issued or published.

To maintain openness and accountability, any requests for exceptions to restrictions will be assessed and authorised through the established representation process, following the same approach applied to temporary use bans. Exception requests must be received within the representation period (see 'Demand actions' technical report for details).

## 5.7 Level 4

At drought level 4, an emergency drought order would allow us to restrict water use through water rationing for example. If we had to resort to these types of measures, we would implement our emergency plans (section 5.3, 'Demand actions' technical report).

## 5.8 Lifting restrictions

At the drought recovery stage, we will notify customers of the revocation of a TUB and NEUB in the same way as their implementation, by publishing notices in two local newspapers and on our company website. As legislation does not mandate a lead-in period for revocations, the lifting of restrictions can take effect immediately upon publication of the notice.

We will ensure that NAVs and retailers are notified in advance of any planned advertising of the lifting of drought measures, so communications and customer engagement can be fully aligned.

Similarly, we will communicate with regulators and stakeholders using the actions set out in Table 2 as our process. This will slowly de-escalate the drought, keeping regulators and stakeholders informed as we cross through each subsequent level.

# 6. Adapting our communications

## 6.1 Agile communication: adapting channels and messages in real time

A key part of managing drought is creating engagement with customers. Our strategy is to have an 'always on' approach to water saving built on consistent, transparent, and continuous messaging. Maintaining this base level of awareness enables us to encourage timely action when demand increases, and storage levels are unseasonably low.

As we enter periods of prolonged dry weather or drought, we will act quickly to strengthen and maintain a timely, consistent dialogue with customers. For example, we will send email updates every two weeks and provide clear visual cues, such as the resometer (Figure 2), to help customers understand the water resource position, the associated potential environmental impacts and the importance of taking appropriate action.

Our agile communications framework is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Responsive planning: Regularly assessing conditions such as the water resource levels and weather forecasts and adjusting messages, tone, frequency, and channels in real time as appropriate to reflect the situation.
- Customer-centric messaging: different social groups contribute to and will be affected differently by drought impacts and any related water restrictions. Consequently, we use research and segmentation such as demographics, meter status, and behaviour to frame and tailor messages to specific groups based on what resonates with them.
- Geographic sensitivity: adapt communications to match the specific geographic location impacted by the event. This could be a specific location, local or regional area. In 2022, we developed specific messaging for customers in the water stressed areas of Carlisle and Rossendale in addition to broader communications. In 2025 we did a similar thing and focused communications in five hotspot areas, including Rochdale, Oldham, Tameside, Stockport and Carlisle and then amplified communications to the whole of the North West as the drought continued (see Appendix B for example communications).
- Enabling positive action: messaging should be meaningful and relevant to the intended audience, empowering individuals to take constrictive steps. For example, people should feel able to make practical changes based on the information provided[10].
- Scale: Choosing the most effective mix of communication channels – regional and local-based on the audience and context, while retaining the flexibility to increase or reduce activity as conditions change. This approach builds on organic reach and channels, supplemented by paid channels to ensure the messaging reaches the widest possible audience.
- Collective impact: maximising and driving action through the delivery and amplification of messages through trusted voices such as; RHS, Girl Guiding, Youth Zones[10].
- Collaborative: joining up activity and communications with neighbouring water companies. During the 2025 drought we carried out joint engagement with Yorkshire Water[10].

The agile communications framework that we use works for both our business as usual "always on" and dry weather and drought communications. It follows 'The Government Communication Service (GCS) Evaluation Cycle'[13], which provides a structured, iterative approach to planning and assessing communications. It focuses on defining clear objectives, monitoring performance throughout delivery, and using insight to refine activity. The Cycle covers six stages: Inputs, Outputs, Outtakes, Outcomes, Impact, and Learning & Innovation.

This approach supports an agile communications strategy for drought management by:

- Embedding continuous learning, allowing messages and channels to be adjusted as conditions evolve.

[13] The GCS Evaluation Cycle (February 2024)

- Focusing on behavioural outcomes, ensuring communications drive the water-saving actions needed from customers.
- Enabling rapid, evidence-based decisions, helping teams respond quickly to changing supply situations or customer sentiment, and,
- Strengthening future activity, with insights feeding directly back into planning and preparedness.

Using the GCS Evaluation Cycle enables us to ensure drought communications remain responsive, targeted and effective throughout the event lifecycle.

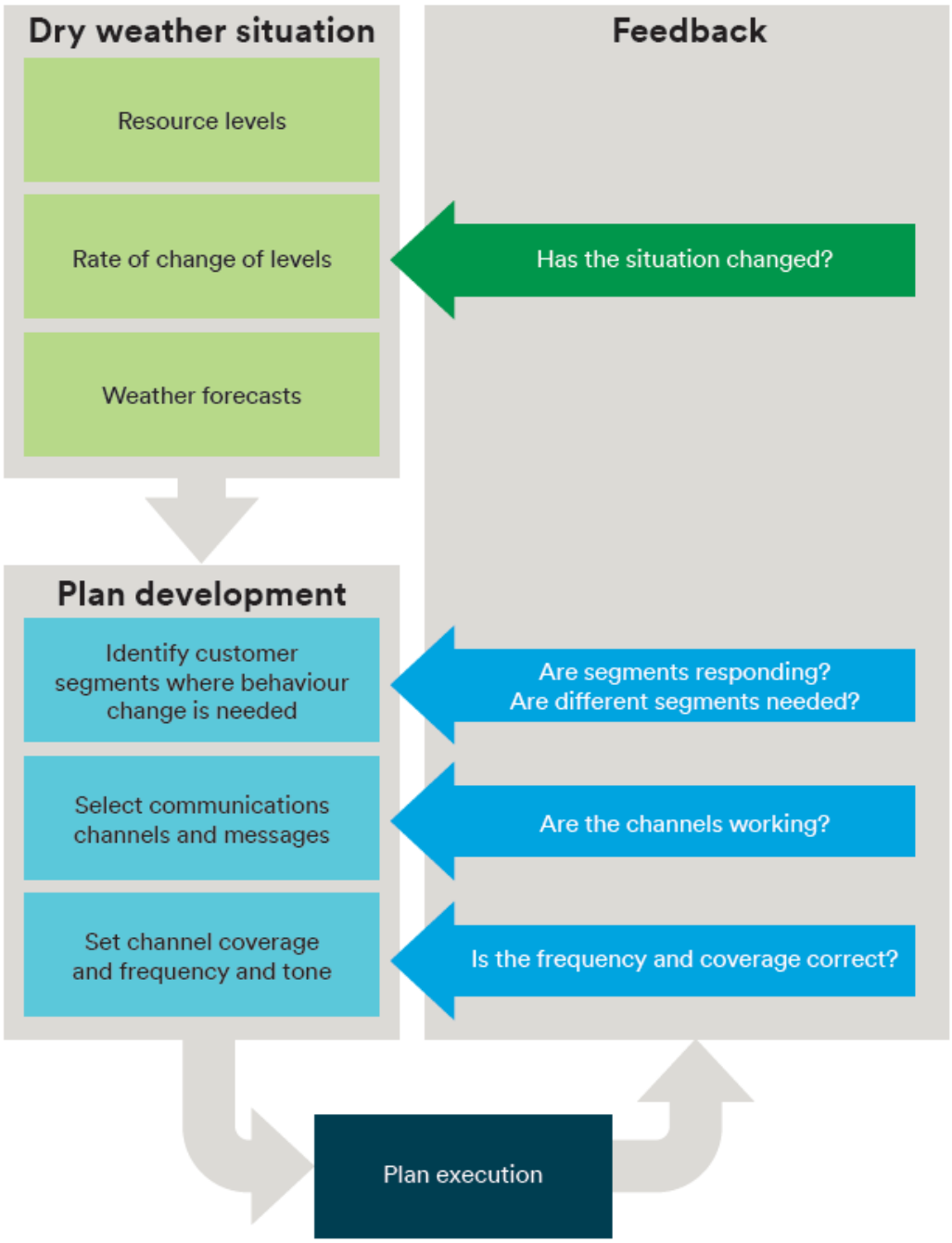
Our agile communications framework (Figure 5) begins with assessing the situation that we are trying to address. During periods of dry weather, we review resource levels and their locations, the rate at which they are changing, and our forecasts for how upcoming weather patterns may affect those levels.

Using this assessment, we then adapt our existing communications to deliver the demand required by encouraging customers to adjust their behaviours. We start by identifying the customer segments we want to reach. This may relate to geography, metered versus unmetered households, or harder to reach groups etc. Based on these segments, we select the most appropriate communication channels using insights from trials and previous experience, and adjust coverage, tone, and frequency as needed. For example, if resource levels have recently declined and are forecast to worsen, we increase the frequency of communications. If drought conditions affect the whole region, we prioritise channels with broad reach; conversely, if a particular segment is concentrated locally, we may use more targets channels such as local influencers.

Once the plan is executed, we evaluate its success. Our primary measure is whether the plan, and the resulting change in demand, has improved the situation. If it has, we adjust our approach accordingly. If it persists, we assess how effectively each of our targeted segments is responding and whether additional segments should be included. We also review channel performance and messaging effectiveness to understand how well our communications are cutting though and whether the frequency needs to be increased or reduced.

Ongoing evaluation and continuous learning allows us to refine our messaging, channels, and frequency, ensuring we remain agile and able to respond effectively to both dry weather events and droughts.

*Figure 5: Agile communications framework*




## 6.2 Communication channels and audiences

We use a broad range of communication channels to engage with our diverse customer base during periods of dry weather and drought (see Table 3). We will make the most effective use of our communication channels to ensure we are reaching the wider community and audiences within it. Throughout the year, we will maintain a string visual presence with consistent messaging, supported by more targeted activity during periods of dry weather.

Our aim is to raise awareness of the importance of saving water and to keep customers and communities well-informed about the drought situation. We will do this by clearly explaining the context behind the water scarcity, helping customers and stakeholders make informed decisions and reinforcing the call to take appropriate action (see examples in Appendix B)[14].

[14] Consumer Council for Water drought communications toolkit (2023)

We recognise the importance of language and context in framing our messages, so they resonate with customers and support positive action[10]. For example, a temporary use ban may seem irrelevant to customers without gardens or outdoor spaces, which can lead to misunderstandings about the seriousness of the water situation. To avoid this, our messaging does not rely solely on specific use-case restrictions. Instead, it focuses on the broader context and highlights the shared responsibility to use water wisely (see example messaging in Table 2).

Our communications provide clear explanations of why restrictions are necessary, the impact of prolonged dry weather on water supplies, and the collective benefits that individual actions can deliver. By tailoring our language and using inclusive, relatable messaging, we ensure all customers understand how they can contribute.

We also recognise that different communities vary in their comfort with scientific or numerical information. To support broader engagement, our communications incorporate visuals, colour and, where helpful, simplify or remove numbers altogether (see examples in Appendix B)[15].

In line with Ofwat's 'Service for all: Vulnerability Guidance', we are committed to deliver inclusive communication[16]. We ensure our messages are accessible to everyone by providing information in a range of formats including large print, braille, and coloured paper.

Our website has been independently assessed for accessibility by the Shaw Trust and tested with a broad range of vulnerable customers. It also offers translation services and supports accessibility tools, such as hearing loops for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Vulnerable customers can access tailored support through a variety of online and offline options, including water efficiency visits and leak repair assistance.

We also use a variety of innovative communication channels to ensure we reach customers who may not engage through digital platforms. These include:

- Letters and printed materials delivered directly to households
- Face-to-face liaison meetings with community stakeholders, and;
- Educational programmes delivered through youth zones and schools

This multi-channel, inclusive approach ensures our communications are accessible, trusted, and effective in helping all customers understand and respond to drought conditions. We will continue to use diverse media and storytelling techniques, including video content, to make complex information more relatable.[17] This multi-channel approach enables us to choose the most suitable delivery methods to target the right audiences to support timely, informed, and appropriate action[18].

To support two-way engagement, we offer a variety of routes for customers to provide feedback or ask questions about drought actions and messaging. These include email, our general and dedicated drought restriction phonelines, and website information. This approach aligns with best practice as recommended by a recent study from the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and the Open University[19].

Social media and digital advertising are valuable channels that allow us to precisely target individuals, specific customer segments (both household and non-household) or particular locations, and to deliver messages in real time. These can be combined with more traditional methods such as newspaper advertising, press features, and coverage on TV and radio, as well as updates through our own website.

We will use direct messaging to communicate with customers, delivered through email, text or landline messaging. Targeted communications will also be sent to customers registered on the online My Account service app. As we move into drought conditions, we will expand this beyond those opted-in users to include all email addresses we

[15] About Drought Handbook (2020-21)

[16] Service for all vulnerability guidance - Ofwat

[17] Consumer Council for Water report findings on consistent messaging

[19] Reviewing approaches for communicating drought status and risk (RADAR) project (2025)

hold. In addition, smart meter communications will be supported with images to help bring usage data to life making it easier for customers to understand their consumption and encouraging behaviour change.

Out of home activity also plays an important role in complementing our digital communications, helping us maintain visibility within communities during dry weather events. By focusing on high footfall locations, we can create pop-up spaces, such as in supermarkets, city and town centres, garden centres, and at major community events like flower shows where we provide water efficiency advice, offer incentives and distribute water saving devices.

Partnerships with organisations like the RHS will continue to enhance both our reach and credibility. Further visual examples of our communications can be found in Appendix B.

***Table 3: Typical communication channels***

| Channel | Example commentary |
|---|---|
| Sponsorship | ITV Weather sponsorship – Border and Granada regions – provides pan regional reach |
| Radio | Commercial channels such as Heart - typically, we will run mid weight radio campaigns with 4.5+ opportunities to hear per week |
| Media | County based press releases shared across regional broadcast media and local media platforms |
| Video on Demand | TV Ad on channels such as 4OD, My5 |
| United Utilities website | Home page banner & splash screen |
| Door Drop | Leaky Loos strips distributed via Royal Mail Door to Door |
| Print | Ads in papers such as Manchester Evening News and Lancashire Post |
| Out of Home (Billboards) | Key sites such as Manchester Arndale Centre, Liverpool one, plus tactical locations e.g. Oldham 6- sheets (Bus Shelters) |
| Email | Monthly My account newsletter + Solus emails and text messages specifically focused on Dry weather/Drought – direct to customers, NAV's and Retailers |
| Letters | For Priority services customers we'll send large Text, braille and coloured Paper communications based on customer preference |
| Household/Non-Household audits | As part of our audit programme, we will provide and install, tap inserts, flow regulators and other efficiency devices |
| Social media | Posts across Instagram, Linked in and Facebook |
| Digital | Display and Search utilising platforms such as Meta, Instagram, Tik Tok and YouTube |

## 6.3 Test and learn approach

We have undertaken several incentive-based trials in recent years, such as the Oldham hotspot trial. To maximise our impact, we integrated our communications and operational interventions in this area, which included:

- Radio, print, digital and video on demand – used to raise campaign awareness
- Water Audits were offered to Household and Non-households
- Leaky loo detection strips were delivered to all homes in the Oldham area
- Communications were also sent to households with leak alarms, advising them of a potential leak, as well as to those identified as having unusually high water consumption
- Press release sent to over 50 local publications to amplify messaging

To evaluate the impact of the campaign, we conducted surveys before, during, and after the activity to benchmark changes in awareness. In parallel, we analysed water usage at the District Metered Area (DMA) level and collected pre- and post-campaign readings from a small number of metered properties within the trial area.

Although the results of this trial were inconclusive, we remain committed to our test-and-learn approach, as it provides valuable insights that help us continuously refine and improve our communications strategy.

# Appendix A AMP7 Communications Performance Summary

The sustained activity throughout AMP7 (2020-2025) has helped embed water-saving behaviours, increase understanding of drought-related challenges and strengthen customer trust. Our approach and the communication techniques deployed have been informed by regular customer research and time spent exploring attitudes to water usage and consumption with customers, as well as adopting best practice techniques from behavioural change science and from other sectors where such change has been delivered.

During AMP7, we utilised data to help change customer behaviour, as smart meter data analysis has provided several opportunities to engage with customers regarding their consumption. For example, the data enables us to identify high users, or those that have a continuous flow of water through their meter which can indicate a leak. When a customer opts to have a meter, we offer information on their water usage through our Customer Visualisation Service, which uses insights from our Automated Meter Read (AMR) meters. More information on our AMP7 water efficiency performance can be found in our Annual Review (2024-25)[20].

This provides a strong platform for a larger-scale, industry-leading water efficiency programme planned in AMP8 (approximately 900,000 smart meters across household and business customers), allowing us to scale service offerings to more customers and identify high consumption or continuous flow more quickly, building on the insights and behaviour change in the last cycle. More information on our AMP8 water demand programme can be in our Company Business Plan (2025-2030)[21].

[20] United Utilities Annual Performance Report 2024/25

[21] UUW05 Chapter 5: Delivering great service

# Appendix B Examples of Communications

***Figure 6: ITV weather advert***

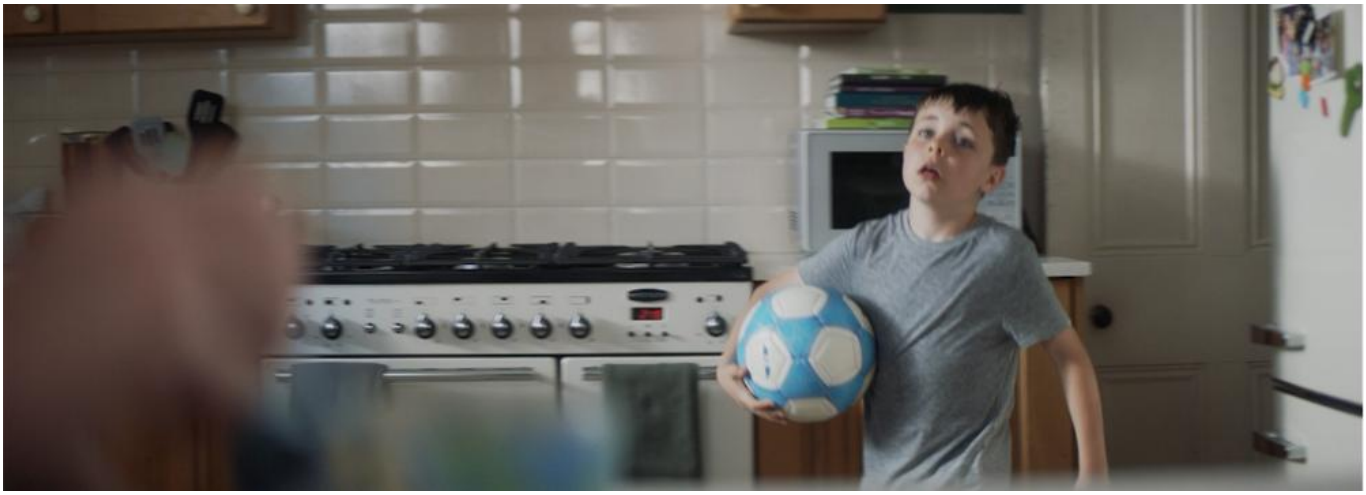


***Figure 7: Social media ads for Meta (Facebook)***


*Figure 8: Social media ads for Meta (Facebook)*

## Hello,

We're all looking for simple ways to save money as household bills continue to rise. Making savings on your water and energy bills could be easier than you think.

Since no-one likes to waste water, we've got three fantastic tips to help you reduce, reuse, and recycle water so every drop counts. These small changes will make a big difference to your bills and help the environment too.

### Tip 1 - Switch from tap to rain for your garden

A water butt is a great way to save rainwater to use in the warmer, drier weather when your garden needs more water. You'll save money if you're on a meter, and your plants will love you for it!

Harvesting rainwater to use in the garden has other benefits too. It's good for the environment as it reduces the demand on local water supplies needed to produce tap water and can lower the risk of flooding by reducing the amount of rainwater that enters local sewer systems.

The good news is that water butts are readily available from most DIY shops, garden centres or to order online so it's easy to shop around to find one that suits your style and budget. We offer a discount on water butts, find out more by clicking on the link below.

Make the switch from tap to rainwater and keep your garden blooming lovely this summer.

**ORDER A WATER BUTT**

### Tip 2: Save on energy bills with a shorter shower

Each household in the North West uses on average around 345 litres of water every day, that's enough water to make 1,380 brews! With around 12% of a household's energy bill being used for heating water for showers, baths and hot water from the tap, contributing to our energy bills, saving water will save you money.

According to the Energy Saving Trust, spending just four minutes in the shower could save £60 a year on your heating bill. You'll save on your water bill too if you're on a meter.

**START SAVING**

### Tip 3: Fix your leaky loo

A leaky loo is one of the most common leaks there is and can waste between 215 and 400 litres of water on average every day. That's like having two extra people using water in your home!

If you're on a meter, a leaking toilet could be costing you as much as £400 a year on your water bill and wasting water from local water sources when demand is already high.

Don't let your water and money literally go down the drain, check your loo for leaks by looking out for water dribbling down the back of the toilet pan and listen for trickling sounds. Click the link below for more information about household leaks.

**FIND OUT MORE**

Thank you for saving water, every drop counts towards saving money on your household bills and helping your local environment.

**United Utilities Water Team**

PS – just to let you know that we're working around the clock to continue to monitor our pipes for leaks and have increased the number of teams we have out and about finding and fixing them. We're also grateful for your support in reporting leaks whenever you see them.

United Utilities
Water for the North West

***Figure 9: RHS partnership sent to customers opted in to marketing to provide specific advice that may be used during drought level 1 (campaign for voluntary use restraint)***

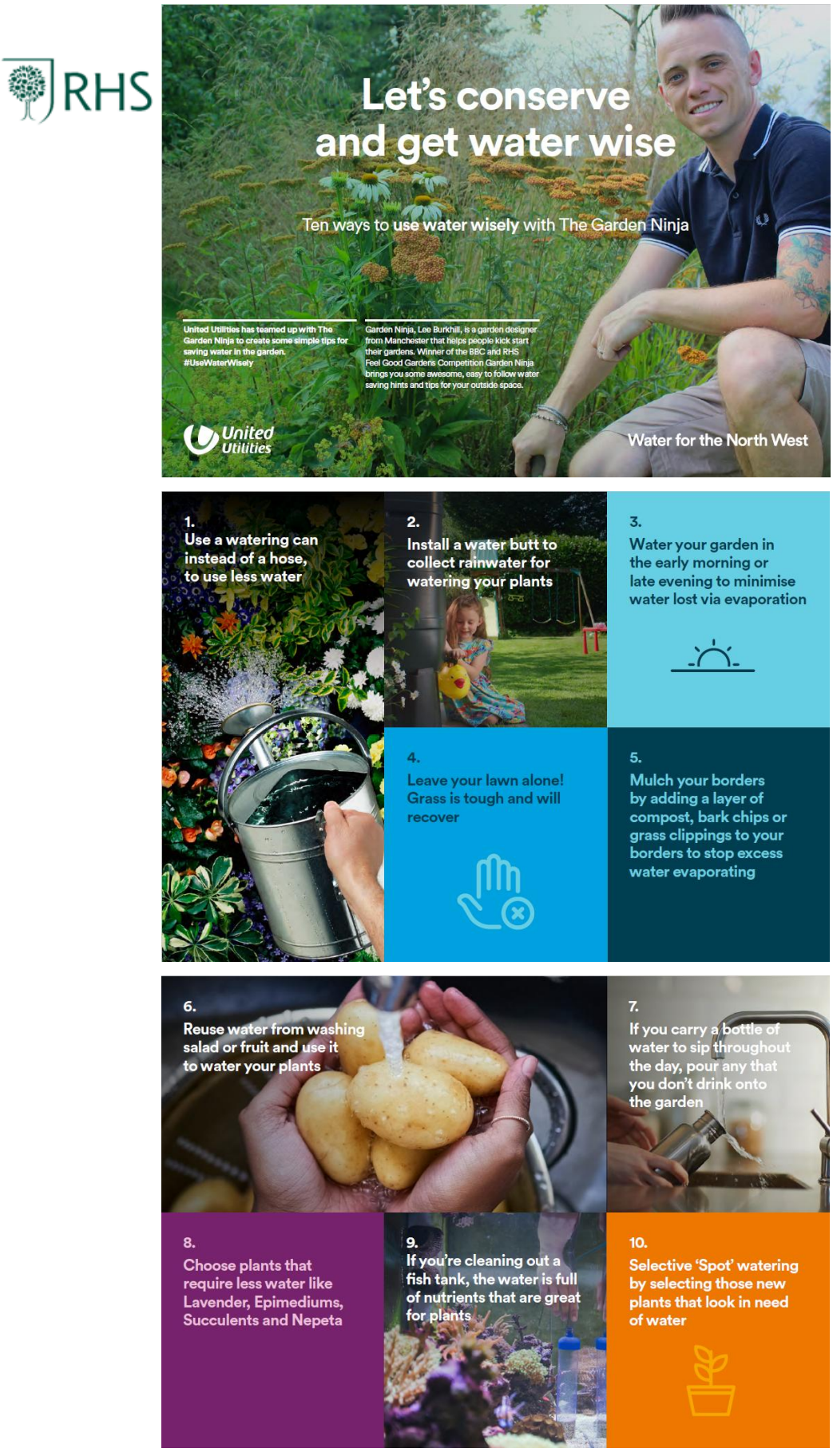
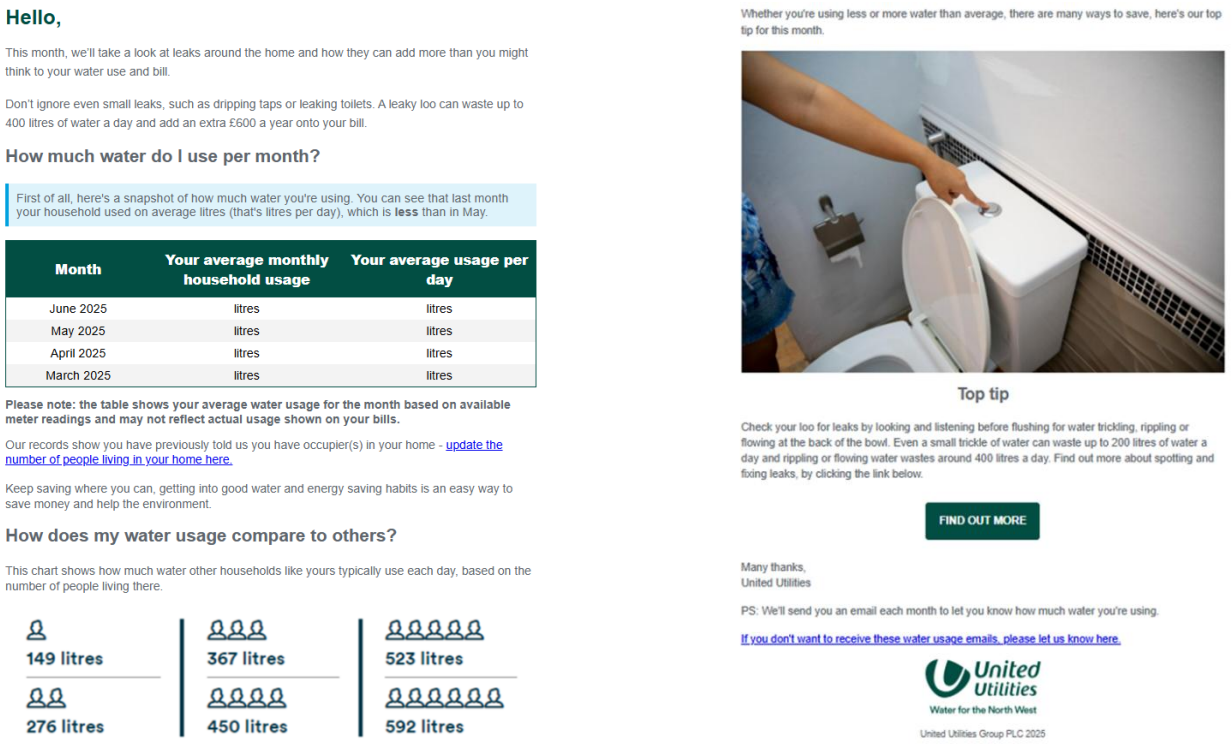


*Figure 10: Customer usage visualisation by email*



Hello,

This month, we'll take a look at leaks around the home and how they can add more than you might think to your water use and bill.

Don't ignore even small leaks, such as dripping taps or leaking toilets. A leaky loo can waste up to 400 litres of water a day and add an extra £600 a year onto your bill.

How much water do I use per month?

First of all, here's a snapshot of how much water you're using. You can see that last month your household used on average litres (that's litres per day), which is **less** than in May.

| Month | Your average monthly household usage | Your average usage per day |
|---|---|---|
| June 2025 | litres | litres |
| May 2025 | litres | litres |
| April 2025 | litres | litres |
| March 2025 | litres | litres |

**Please note: the table shows your average water usage for the month based on available meter readings and may not reflect actual usage shown on your bills.**

Our records show you have previously told us you have occupier(s) in your home - update the number of people living in your home here.

Keep saving where you can, getting into good water and energy saving habits is an easy way to save money and help the environment.

How does my water usage compare to others?

This chart shows how much water other households like yours typically use each day, based on the number of people living there.

149 litres | 367 litres | 523 litres

276 litres | 450 litres | 592 litres

Whether you're using less or more water than average, there are many ways to save, here's our top tip for this month.

Top tip

Check your loo for leaks by looking and listening before flushing for water trickling, rippling or flowing at the back of the bowl. Even a small trickle of water can waste up to 200 litres of water a day and rippling or flowing water wastes around 400 litres a day. Find out more about spotting and fixing leaks, by clicking the link below.

FIND OUT MORE

Many thanks,
United Utilities

PS: We'll send you an email each month to let you know how much water you're using.

If you don't want to receive these water usage emails, please let us know here.

United Utilities
Water for the North West

United Utilities Group PLC 2025

*Figure 11: School and business water efficiency audit communications*

### *Figure 12: NAV and Retailer email (dry weather 2025)*

Good afternoon,

I am writing to provide an update on our water resources situation, as you'll be aware, we have been experiencing a prolonged period of dry, warm weather across the region and it has been the driest Spring since the 1950's. Water levels in the North West's rivers, lakes, groundwaters and reservoirs are currently lower than average for this time of year. We've continued to see the risk of wildfires across our region and other sectors, like agriculture and growers, are struggling with the dry ground conditions.

There are a number of actions we are taking to help safeguard water supplies and protect the environment. To help encourage reductions in water use, we will be sending some direct communications to domestic and business customers (**please see unbranded copies attached**) and increasing our messaging through normal media channels, urging people to act now

During the warm weather, our teams have been cleaning and putting more water into supply to match the demand for it. At times, the extra water being used is equivalent to supplying a town the size of Blackpool and the Fylde coast area. Our water resources team and hydrologists are monitoring the situation daily, to ensure we manage and balance this demand in the best possible way.

Our well tested plans include using our vast integrated network of pipes to move water around from one part of the region to another, where it is needed. Customers in some areas may notice some slight changes in the taste of their water as we move water around. While this may be a bit different, customers should be reassured that their tap water will continue to meet all stringent water quality requirements.

We have also begun reducing water pressures in some areas. This is being done in line with BAU pressure management levels and we are taking great care to ensure that sensitive customers are not affected.

We will have brought around a further 75 million litres of water each day into the system by the end of the month from sources that have existing abstraction licences.

We continue to find and fix leaks as quickly as possible, a task made even more challenging by the dry weather. As the ground dries out, it moves and this can cause some of our water pipes to shift and leak. Last week we fixed 900 leaks, more than we have ever repaired before in that timescale and we are at our lowest

ever level of leakage. Since our last email explaining how dry it has been, we've seen a fantastic response and the number of leaks reported to us has significantly increased.

We have been sharing updates over the past few weeks and continue to urge everyone to act now and do all that they can to reduce the amount of water used, helping to manage the impact on their local environment and, in turn, if on a meter, saving money on both water and energy.

Since April, we:

- have sent targeted information to more than 550,000 households and businesses in hotspot areas where demand was high;
- have sent over 2 million emails to customers across the region to ask for support in saving water where they can;
- contacted more than 160,000 households where we can see water usage has increased and could be due to a leak;
- switched daily messages on the regional ITV weather sponsorship to water saving information – reaching 4.2 million adults in the North West;
- are promoting water saving messages through On Demand TV, reaching 2 million people;
- are running daily information across commercial radio stations and have taken part in local BBC radio shows;
- have included messages in regional newspapers, with a combined readership of over 800,000;
- are using digital and all our social media channels to share our information and advice;
- have contacted youth groups across the Northwest; and
- are sharing our information with partner organisations across the region, including asking for the support of our supply chain in ensuring water is being used carefully across all operations.

With some rain in the forecast, this may mean demand reduces and people may be tempted to think saving water won't be needed. However, we need a few weeks of rainfall to help reservoirs recover to normal levels for this time of year so we are asking people to use less water where they can.

We are working collaboratively with colleagues in Yorkshire Water to spread the messages about the impact of the dry weather, highlighted in particular by a spate of moorland fires on both sides of the Pennines.

Thank you for helping us to save water

Good afternoon,

As you will be aware, it has been the driest start to the year since records began 90 years ago.

As a result of the dry weather, our reservoir storage levels have been declining and we have now crossed the first drought triggers at Haweswater and Castle Carrock reservoirs indicating an increased risk of drought, not that a drought is expected.

**As such, we would appreciate your support in sharing water efficiency messages / increasing your own comms with your customers to reduce any unnecessary water use. I have attached a copy of some direct domestic and NHH customer messaging that we are in the process of sending which will hopefully be of use to you.**

Below are some of the actions we have been taking to safeguard water supplies and protect the environment in the first four months of this year.

By making operational changes, we have introduced an additional 45 million litres of water a day (Ml/d) into our supply system. Plans are well advanced to bring a further 102 Ml/d into supply from sources that have existing abstraction permits, with 75 Ml/d planned to be in use by the end of this month.

Our sponsorship of the ITV weather is now focusing solely on water efficiency messaging and is reaching 4.2m adults five times a day. In addition:

- our email newsletter containing water efficiency tips has been sent to over 600,000 customers;
- our content has generated over 6.2 million social media opportunities to view;
- radio advertising across Greater Manchester has achieved over 2.5 million impressions; and
- saving 3.8 million litres of water every day by repairing leaky taps, toilets and showers, and installing water efficiency measures through engagement with 5,000 organisations (visiting schools, care homes, leisure centres, public sector premises and small businesses)

Our efforts to reduce water consumption have seen a positive response from customers and we have seen reductions in demand over the past few weeks.

We have been achieving the highest number of weekly leakage repairs – at over 800 a week – with plans to increase this further, in part enabled by our use of groundbreaking use of satellite technology to detect leaks.

Should the dry weather continue, in addition to the actions described above we will roll out further activity in line with our drought plan which is available on our website here. This initial drought trigger is the first of four checkpoints to ensure we are taking all appropriate actions to manage water resources effectively and we are well-prepared to deal with any prolonged periods of dry weather.

The anticipated timeframe for Drought Trigger 2 is between May 20th – 27th, dependent upon demand. As you would expect, we are precautionarily looking at Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) and are also evaluating a variety of other interventions.

I will keep you updated on the situation and will initiate further discussions when appropriate.

Many thanks

*Figure 13: County based press releases – Greater Manchester*


*Figure 14: County based press releases – Cumbria*

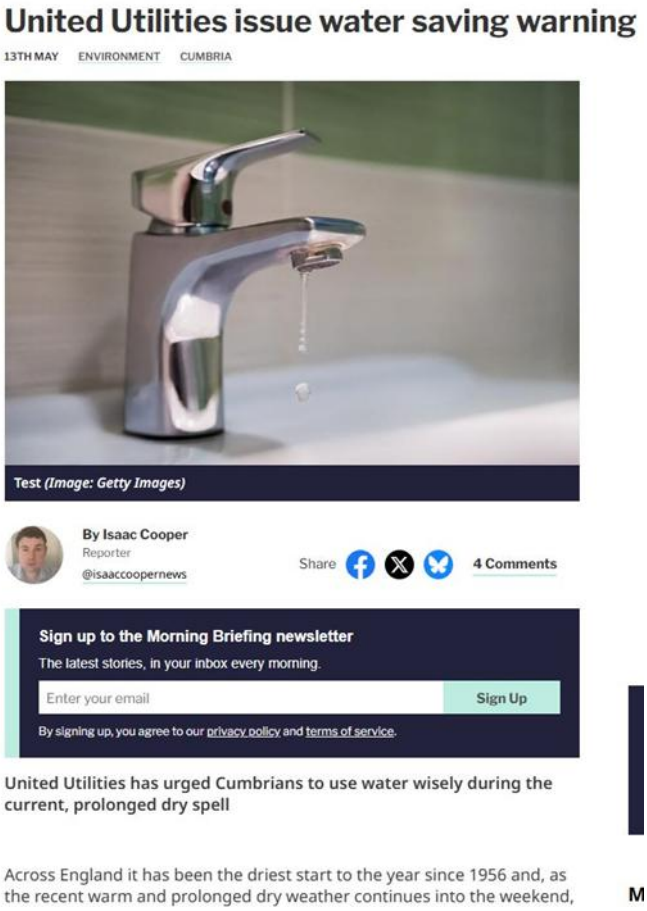


*Figure 15: United Utilities company website*

# United Utilities urges customers to use water wisely during prolonged dry spell

08 May 2025

Across England it has been the driest start to the year since 1956 and, as the recent warm and prolonged dry weather continues into the weekend, United Utilities is asking everyone to help use water wisely as it ramps up its own operational activities to manage water resources.

The lack of rainfall has led to lower than usual reservoir levels with regional reservoir levels being 69% full, compared to over 90% this time last year.

The company is working hard behind the scenes to make the very best use of its water resources.

This includes using its vast interconnected system of treatment works and pipes to move water from one part of the region to another to 'top up' areas that are lower and tackling leaks.

United Utilities has also recorded its lowest levels of leakage across the North West and in the last year has increased its find and fix rates by 70 per cent. There are now 100 teams working around the clock fixing over 800 leaks a week, saving over 3.5 million litres a day.

Homes and businesses are also being offered water efficiency audits, and the company has engaged with 5,000 organisations so far helping them to identify and repair leaky taps, toilets and showers, and install water efficiency measures, saving 3.8 million litres of water every day.

Over the next five years, the company is also investing £380 million to upgrade over 925km of water network across the region with more durable and flexible pipes, built to withstand high pressure and temperature variations to protect against bursts and leaks.

At the same time, it is investing over £3.5 billion in new aqueduct supplies and water treatment works that will safeguard supplies over the long-term.

Everyone can help by seeing how water can be saved around the home and garden as the warm weather continues.

On average, a person uses around 140 litres of water a day. Taking just one minute less in the shower will save 12 litres and one fewer load of washing will save around 40 litres. To put that into context, 40 litres is equivalent to 70 pints of milk.

# Appendix C Research Approach and Insights

## C.1 Strategy

United Utilities runs a comprehensive and robust customer insight programme. Each insight and research project has used an appropriate method to capture a variety of customer and stakeholder opinions, ensuring a representative view of the diverse customer base across the North West. For example:

- Our research includes customers living across the North West region, from the rural areas of Cumbria or Cheshire, and coastal towns and villages across Lancashire, through to the urban areas of Greater Manchester or Liverpool.
- Not everyone is the same so we group customers so we can make comparisons to understand the priorities of different groups – for example future bill payers, 'priority customers', or those living in vulnerable circumstances.
- The North West has 41% of the most deprived areas in the country and 47% of households have less than £100 savings to cope with unexpected bills. We ensure we listen to customers in different circumstances to capture a broad range of views.
- We take into account other criteria when understanding customer views such as age, gender, income, social-economic grouping, and whether their water supply is metered or unmetered.

All of the feedback helps us to shape our commitments to customers.

This iterative customer research programme, reinforced by our by Price Review 2024 (PR24) business plan testing, has allowed us to understand the importance of water efficiency and resilience as a customer priority throughout the unique context of the new technology emerging, cost of living crisis and worsening climate change. We have complemented this research with water efficiency trials to gain better insight into how and when we speak to customers on this topic and the best way to promote water efficiency behaviour change.

A wide range of different research projects were developed to explore different aspects of customers' views and provide opportunity for customers to engage and co-design long-term solutions to the challenges we face. This includes quantitative customer priorities tracking, used to evaluate how much customers value water supply for now and in the future, and qualitative focus groups on looking at long term ambitions. The overall sentiment established through these projects is that customers put a high value on United Utilities providing clean drinking water. A breakdown of the customer research follows:

***Figure 16: Water Efficiency insights strategy***

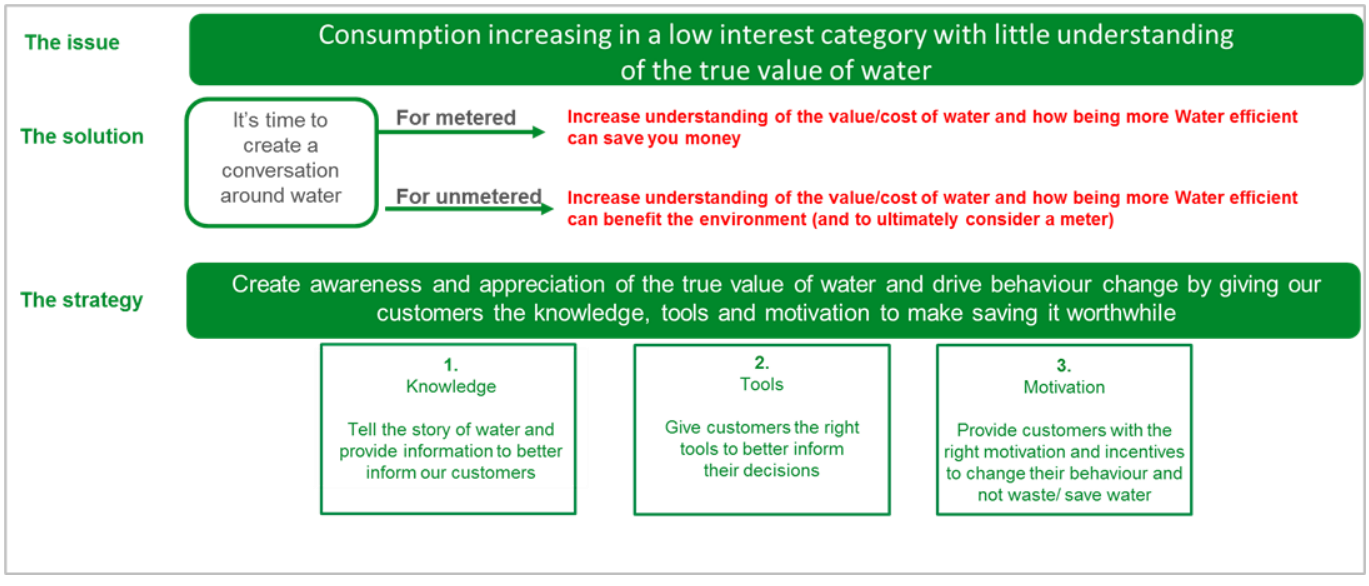


*Figure 17: Customer research themes*

**Water Efficiency ODI Tracking**

To track water efficiency communications awareness and water quality communications awareness, amongst customers. Scores of which are regularly monitored to ensure consistency. When scores show a dip in awareness, the data is used to evidence the need for further investment.

**The majority of customers recall something about water saving, and TV ads are consistently the most recalled channel, followed by email.**

**Smart Metering**

To understand customer views of the smart meter proposition with customers, evaluating propositions, initiatives and communications to encourage customers to install smart meters including efficiency

**Highlighted that customers tend to be largely on board with the idea of saving water, shown how the most appealing feature of smart water meters for HH customers would be the potential reduce water usage and energy bills.**

**Long Term Delivery Strategy**

To understand customer views of the UU long term delivery strategy ambitions, including water usage in the context of a 25 year lookahead for the future and UU's role in preparing for this

**Highlighted that water supply and efficiency is a core priority for customers and that educational campaigns would be beneficial.**

**Customer Priorities**

To understand customer priorities to share approach to strategic plans as part of PR24.

**Confirmed that a reliable supply of water now and in the future is an important priority to almost all customers.**

**WRMP Immersive Options Testing**

To understand customer prioritisation of water resources initiatives to inform the WRMP.

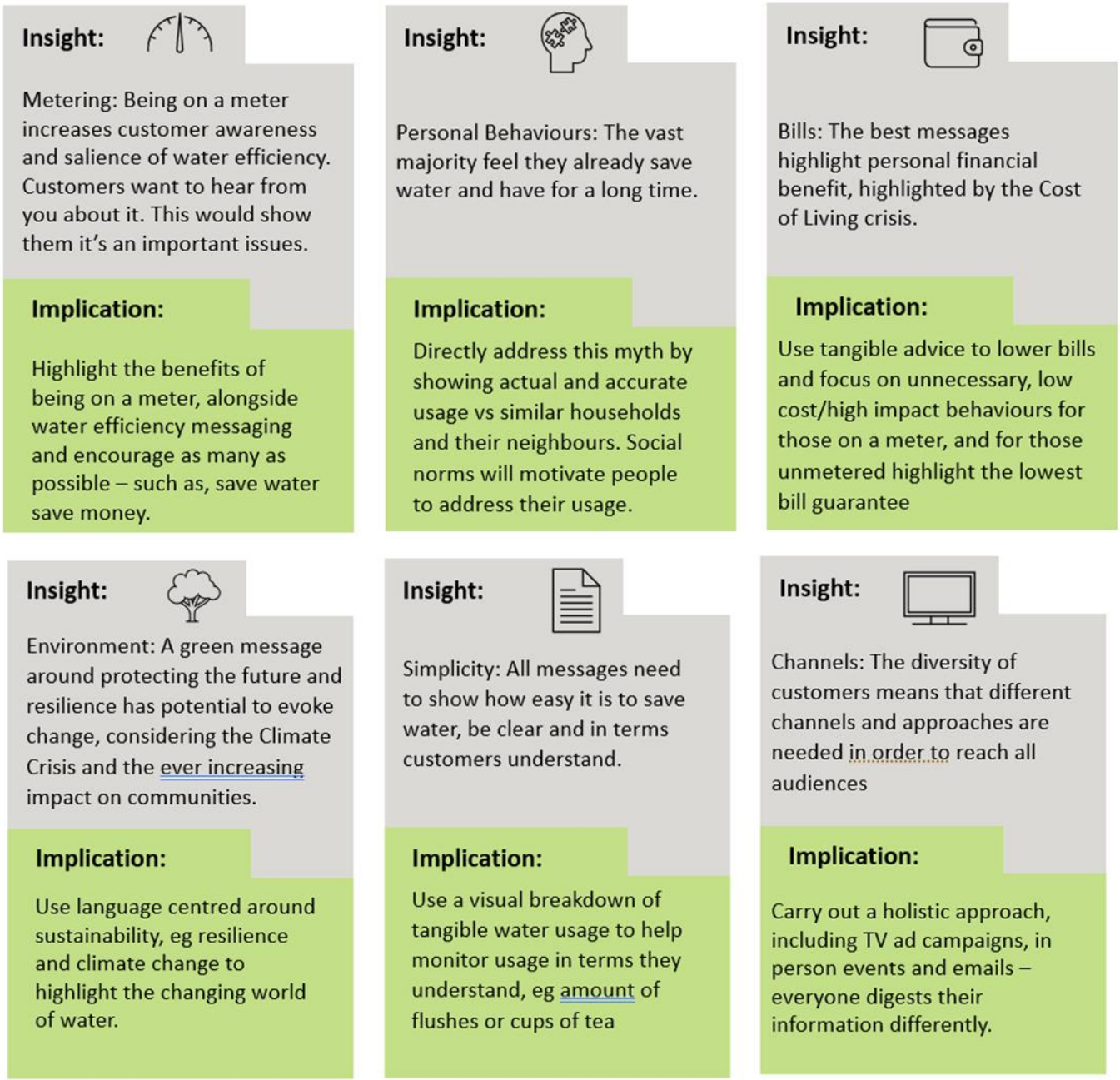
**Confirmed that customers prioritised leakage, smart metering and promoting water efficiency as their top priorities for water resource management. Strong endorsement of measures that encourage more responsible behaviour at a household level for wastewater**

**Water Efficiency Trials**

To understand the success of various approaches for communicating water efficiency messaging.

**Highlighted that customers find a visual breakdown of tangible water usage helpful when monitoring their usage**

***Figure 18: Communicating water efficiency key insights and implications***



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United Utilities

Water for the North West