

Appendix B

Drought Communications Plan

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1. Introduction

Effective communication is an essential part of drought management.

From previous drought periods, particularly that experienced in the summer of 2025, we've learned how important it is to communicate clearly with our customers about the need to cut back on water use.

Instead of limiting our messaging to general tips, we want to take a more tailored approach, giving our customers a better understanding of:

- how we manage our water resources,
- the impact periods of drought have on our water supplies and network,
- what we're doing, including fixing leaks and investing in our infrastructure.

We also want to embrace innovative ways to share these messages. By doing this, we can help customers recognise the need to reduce their water usage, and act upon it, before temporary use bans (TUBs) become necessary.

Our priority is to inform and prepare our customers, so they understand the risks of drought and its broader implications.

This document is intended to be an overview of the approach South Staffs Water, and Cambridge Water, will take, it is not a comprehensive action plan.

We will adopt a flexible approach, with an agile communication strategy which will adapt to the unique circumstances each drought period presents. We want to ensure a consistent approach in our messaging to relevant audiences. This includes any communication relating to long-term planning and water resources.

This plan is additional to our 'business as usual' (BAU) communication, providing general advice to customers on water usage and how to be more water efficient, whilst also potentially saving money, energy and protecting the environment.

Our BAU approach includes:

- sharing updates on initiatives and campaigns, relevant awareness events, incidents and general guidance through our social media channels;
- informing customers of the work we're doing to create more resilience in our network by investing in infrastructure upgrades, through customer letters and our website;
- using the homepage of our website to share important messages relating to incidents, tips on how to be more water efficient, access to free water-saving devices and important news stories;
- sending targeted emails to customers;
- setting up roadshow events, wherever possible; and,
- sharing joint-sector campaign messaging, such as "Water's worth saving".

2. Objectives

During a drought, we aim to provide up-to-date, clear, concise and, where necessary, detailed information on requirements for restrictions, for example, how and when they will be applied.

Our overall objectives are:

- To keep internal and external stakeholders aware of how a drought is developing.

- To educate stakeholders on how to prepare for, adapt to and mitigate water use restrictions.
- To clearly outline any measures required, and the impact of those measures.
- Engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure consistent messaging is shared with household and non-household customers.

By meeting these objectives, we aim to reduce overall water demand during a period of drought and reduce water waste through increasing the number of leaks reported and fixed.

3. Current and possible risks

Our regions have experienced more drought-like conditions in recent years, most notably in 2025.

The winter of 2024-25 saw only 65% of long-term average rainfall in Cambridge, and 83% of long-term average rainfall in the South Staffs region. Across the UK, it was also the driest, warmest spring for more than 132 years.

This was followed by a warm, dry summer with the hottest and driest June since 1976 and a number of heatwaves were declared. During this month, customer average weekly demand reached 365 million litres of water per day in South Staffs, a 15% increase on typical demand, and 98 million litres per day in Cambridge, an 8% increase. On several days this increase was over 20% of typical demand.

In July, the Environment Agency announced the East and West Midlands had officially entered drought, while the Anglian region was in prolonged dry weather status. At this time, the water level at Blithfield Reservoir, one of our main water sources in South Staffs, dropped to 52.2%, much lower than the usual 72% for the time of year. River levels and groundwater supplies were also lower than usual in both our regions.

As a consequence of these conditions, water resources, such as our reservoirs and the replenishment of underground sources, are affected. This also leads to farmers having to increase the demand of their on-site storage reservoirs to irrigate crops, and river flows declining.

When conditions like these begin to impact on supplies and the environment, we activate our drought plan. The actions that we can take in our drought plans include restrictions on customer use – initially temporary usage bans – what our customers usually call a ‘hosepipe ban’ – being put in place.

The last time we introduced restrictions was in 1991-92 in the Cambridge region and in 1976 in the South Staffs region.

4. Using water-saving campaign insight

In recent years, we have run water-saving campaigns in Cambridgeshire to help inform and educate customers about the challenges of water scarcity, as well as our water resources in the region.

In 2023, we ran a campaign called 'Can for the Cam' and followed this up in 2024 with 'Yes We Cam'. These were designed to make demand savings in a similar way to imposing TUBs, but through customers making voluntary changes to water-usage behaviours, particularly associated with discretionary use such as hosepipes for outside use, and recognising wastage in the home.

The first campaign aimed to reduce peak water consumption throughout the summer and save 500,000 litres per day, concentrating on gardeners who were one of the biggest reasons for the seasonal increase. We asked them to change one single habit: ditch the hosepipe for a watering can. Almost twice the target water was saved every day of the campaign, at 940,000 litres per day.

The Yes We Cam campaign had a much wider remit, highlighting the importance of water conservation across the region. With an increased budget, the campaign aimed to double the water-saving and awareness targets set the year before, encouraging collective community action, with six pledges to sign up to and the offer of a free plumber visit to fix any leaky loos.

A campaign website (yeswecam.co.uk) was set up to collect sign-ups and add customers to a mailing list where they were actively supported to achieve their pledge with regular messages about the importance of water saving, so they could maintain their behaviour change.

Conclusions from research carried out after the campaign indicated the Yes We Cam campaign had generated 5% greater prompted and unprompted awareness, attributed to marketing emails that had been received and adverts that were put up in locations across Cambridge.

From all those who responded and indicated they had prompted or unprompted awareness of the Yes We Cam campaign, the overarching aim of the campaign was understood, with the top theme being that it was about encouraging water conservation.

Of those who responded to our research and had taken one of the pledges, 56% felt that the campaign had driven them to reduce water use within their household.

Those respondents who felt the campaign had reduced their water use at home were invited to share which behaviours they felt were impacted. 76% felt that they were turning the tap off every time whilst brushing their teeth, whilst 40% of respondents were likely to be running the washing machine full in eco mode every time.

In May 2025, it was concluded that 1.36 million litres of water had been saved every day between July and December when we activated our campaign, equalling 250.2 million litres overall.

5. Lessons learned

According to the Met Office, the summer of 2025 was the hottest on record. The season, which covers June, July and August, was characterised by persistent warmth, several heatwaves and below-average rainfall, particularly in England.

Customer emails were sent in May, July and August 2025. Open rates were higher in the July campaign email, suggesting customers were more engaged with the topic given it was the first, sustained period of hotter weather.

On every customer email, we provide the opportunity to rate the email and complete a short survey. The July customer email generated 1,250 completed surveys across South Staffs Water and Cambridge Water, which provided us with valuable insight.

The questions asked sought to understand:

- If the email content was helpful to customers.
- If the content was accessible and easy to digest.
- Customer sentiment around the email content.

As each email was sent, we used the customer feedback received to tweak content and messaging in the next.

Some of the key take outs from the July and August emails:

- Around 8 in 10 customers found the emails easy to understand and follow, which showed that a 'less is more' approach worked well.
- Click rates to the website were below expectation in the July email, which suggested that while customers found the content useful, it was not inspiring many to seek further advice; engagement improved in the August emails when more relevant content was provided with links through to tips and free water saving devices.
- Using a more emotive and hard-hitting message in July and the second August email landed well, highlighting that relevant and timely messages can be effective at ensuring more customers find the content useful when they have a clear context for the request to save water.
- Messages around 'working together' resonated with some customers – showing what we are doing to tackle the issue and what the customer can do in a simple way. 'Small changes = big difference' was mentioned in the responses as a good hook, citing the link between change and avoiding a TUB.
- Putting the amount that different uses of water have is seen as a positive. This shocked some into saying they would make changes after being presented with these facts.
- Many customers appreciated the balance that the email was not overly pushy, and used facts to put forward the case as to why customers were being asked to think about their water use.
- Leakage remains the most negative emotional response to not engaging with the content – some said they felt open to the messaging, but feel it is pointless trying to make small changes when they see/read about how much water is being lost to leakage.

As a result of these key take outs, we have some learnings to apply to future water efficiency campaigns:

- We should have an up-to-date FAQ bank with responses to the main challenges raised by customers.

- There are continued calls for a graphic representation of the water levels of aquifers in the Cambridge Water region.
- Household customers want to be kept informed about what we're doing with non-household customers to reduce their water consumption so we should consider providing a link to content that explains the plans for non-household customers.
- We should recognise that some customers will already be saving water to keep bills down, due to recent price increases – a 'thanks for your efforts so far, but we need to go further' narrative should be tested.
- Some customers who have specific PSR needs and already watching their usage found part of the emails insulting – we should consider sending a different version of the email to PSR customers, particularly those in financial support, using a more sensitive tone of voice.
- Trying to make the emails more visual – e.g. use of video content – would help engage those who don't like to read information.
- Push the free water saving devices in the email message more, alongside offering help with water butts, particularly where to get discounts on these.
- There is some evidence that emailing customers in Cambridge Water regularly, when not done through a carefully managed campaign like Yes We Cam, leads to increasing dissatisfaction with being contacted, particularly if the tips shared are similar or not perceived as adding value.

The acid test for targeted customer communications should always be the measure of demand and whether this was lower than expected following the communication. This was proven following the July email, where notable reductions vs expectation followed over the weekend.

6. Stakeholders

As well as our household customers, we communicate with other stakeholders, from regulators to other water companies.

Whilst the following list is not fully comprehensive, it includes the key audiences.

Lists with full details of each audience are held and updated by the company as an ongoing activity.

Stakeholders	
Customers	Household Vulnerable customers and those on our Priority Services Register Businesses Commercial and non-household/business customers (through retailers) Customer Panel and H2Online members MPs/councillors
Regulators	Defra Environment Agency Ofwat Natural England Drinking Water Inspectorate CCW (the consumer watchdog) Water UK Historic England
Other organisations	Neighbouring water companies NAVs (also known as insets) Regional groups, such as Water Resources West and Water Resources East Canal & River Trust Local authorities Local Resilience Forum Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) Fire Service Environmental organisations (including, but not limited to, Wildlife Trusts) Other sectors, as appropriate
Employees	Employees of South Staffordshire Plc Contractors

7. Methodology

We have a range of communication channels used to share messages to our audiences. These are a mixture of owned, earned and paid for.

Customers

We routinely use our owned channels for communicating with our customers and wider stakeholders about topics and areas of our business related to the services we provide and our commitments.

One of our owned channels is social media, where we use Facebook, Instagram and X to reach many of our customers. Through these, we regularly share messaging about using water wisely, shedding light on why water efficiency is important, as well as the work we're doing to address challenges on our water resources, sharing updates on investment in our infrastructure and our network.

Another one of our owned channels is our website. We regularly update our drought-related information and water efficiency advice, sharing news and blog items related to these topics.

Where we feel it is necessary to reach our customers directly, we utilise our email and SMS systems. We regularly use these to communicate key information related to billing, planned and unplanned supply interruptions and water efficiency, particularly when we enter the early stages of our drought trigger levels.

As our drought triggers escalate, we use earned and paid communication channels to amplify our messages. These include newspapers, radio and TV. These help us to reach more of our stakeholders and raise general awareness about the status of drought and the need to reduce water demand. We also look to reach more people via social media, through targeted, sponsored content.

When necessary, we utilise other forms of advertising, looking at spaces on buses and billboards for example.

Direct one-to-one communication through meetings, briefings, workshops and letters to individual stakeholders becomes more important as the drought escalates.

Regulators

Regular meetings are held with our environmental regulators to discuss water resource issues, and the frequency of these increases once the activation of our drought plan is imminent, and throughout the escalation through drought level status. Once we reach drought trigger level one in our drought plan the number of contacts will have increased significantly, alongside updates on forward-looking prospects

Our summer or winter action plans will be in place as a matter of course each year, and, as we activate our drought plan, we initiate our internal drought management teams and summer action group (SAG).

As we progress into Level 1 status, our water resources teams will increase regular liaison meetings, primarily with the Environment Agency (EA), and we will attend additional meetings, typically the Defra National Drought Group (NDG) which provides updates to Water UK and Ofwat, dry weather meetings with local EA offices, and in South Staffs the River Severn Regulation Group. These are supported by the wider drought management team and the Drought Strategy Manager. We also update The Drinking Water Inspectorate, Ofwat, the Consumer Council for Water (CCW) and the regional planning groups separately, as required.

Alongside sharing regular updates with Defra and stakeholders on the water resource situation, we provide updates on the drought actions and measures we are taking and planning to reduce demand and protect reservoir storage levels. We also provide a forward-looking forecast on when we expect our drought level status to change under various rainfall scenarios.

Communication groups are formed separately to focus on this key area, to work with networks such as Water UK, and CCW is kept updated on any customer communication. We aim, to ensure consistent messaging and the timing of this messaging to customers wherever possible - for example, in regions where multiple water companies operate.

Before we formally commence the process of implementing water-use restrictions as a Level 2 action, we gather feedback from the EA and CCW, and ensure that they are fully aware of the approach and timings we intend for introduction of a TUB, including the communications and consultation we plan to carry out. This will be the same for any specific drought permits/orders at Level 3, with the addition of other stakeholders, such as Natural England, also provided with as much notice as possible.

Other water companies and retailers

Wholesalers

Regular liaison takes place with other wholesale water companies, particularly in respect of bulk supply arrangements. Neighbouring water companies are advised in the event of water-use restrictions being implemented, and we also engage with them through Water Resources West (WRW), and Water Resources East (WRE).

NAVs

We will contact NAVs in our area and aim to co-ordinate any restrictions that we impose, so that our approach is consistent.

Non-household retailers

Our wholesale team will share regular information on the dry weather and water resources situation and provide water-efficiency advice that retailers can provide to their customers.

We ask retailers to share messages from our website and social media to increase reach and visibility.

Ongoing work takes place with our retailers to share water efficiency advice and opportunities. We have held sessions with several retailers, sharing our own work on water efficiency, how this could be supported by the retailers and how we can work together to support businesses with their water efficiency awareness and activities.

We are part of the Retailer-Wholesaler Group, which has developed a working plan to further promote water efficiency for non-householders.

When we enter into a drought, we will look to work with this group to enable consistent messaging for retailers. We will also work with retailers should there be any requests for assistance, e.g. regarding water restrictions or support for large businesses.

Other organisations

Key stakeholder organisations are contacted and kept informed of the potential need for drought permit/order applications.

We work with them and ask them to reinforce water-saving messages and, in the case of environmental groups, how it will affect the environment.

8. Key Messages

We will keep messages clear, consistent and manageable to ensure maximum understanding and impact.

Our key messages will be tailored to the audience we are communicating with, using the most appropriate channel, determined by the status of operations as triggered by monitoring.

Below is an outline of what our key messages will be based on:

- Customers can do a lot to help by taking small actions as part of their everyday water habits, which collectively, can save significant volumes of water.
- Drought is caused by periods of particularly warm weather and a lack of rainfall, which depletes our local water resources.
- The responsibility of saving water isn't just on customers. We have to take accountability for the water that is lost from our network through leakage. We are committed to reducing leakage in our regions by 15% in South Staffs and 20% in Cambridge.

As suggested in the Environment Agency's National Drought Framework, we will consider joint communications with the Environment Agency and other stakeholders, such as CCW, as this could help to reinforce the messages. This will ensure our messages align with those from other organisations.

9. Timing and Frequency

Below we have outlined how we will deliver and escalate the level of messaging as we move through our drought monitoring trigger levels.

The communication plan escalates as a dry weather situation progresses into drought and becomes increasingly severe through the drought plan trigger levels.

A non-prescriptive approach maintains some flexibility according to the audience and channel to allow an agile communications strategy.

Type of messaging

Drought Status Level	Message Theme	Implementation Time
Normal	Business as usual (BAU) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive water efficiency awareness and education 	Ongoing
Environmental Stress	Situation assessment and status – potential to worsen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced water efficiency promotion, e.g. promotion of switching to a water meter, thinking about how much water is used in certain activities and whether they are necessary • What we are doing to manage demands and protect the environment, e.g. our leakage commitment and in Cam our PEBBLE biodiversity initiative • Engagement with local site managers and interest groups • Bespoke education, advice and awareness visits where we can help the local environment 	1-2 weeks
Drought Monitoring (Trigger Level 1)	Situation assessment and status – increasing severity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued promotion of water efficiency, switching to a meter, water use in certain activities, and highlighting water wastage • What we are doing to manage increased demand and protect the environment - and how customers can help. • Leakage levels and updates on demand and demand management effectiveness • Enhanced metering campaign • Bespoke education, advice and awareness visits • Updates on our groundwater levels and license agreements • Appeals for restraint, highlighting the potential for temporary usage bans • Updates on environmental support schemes 	From one week, up to four weeks, depending on activity being implemented

Drought Management (Trigger Level 2)	Situation assessment and status – increasing urgency of messages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a temporary usage ban • Updates on what activities are and aren't prohibited in the region • Further appeals for restraint on excessive water use • What we are doing to manage demand and protect the environment • Leakage levels and updates on demand and demand management effectiveness • Continuation of metering campaign • Bespoke education, advice and awareness visits • Updates on groundwater levels and license agreements 	From one week, up to four weeks, depending on activity being implemented
Severe Drought Management (Trigger Level 3a)	Situation assessment and status – increasing urgency of messages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National messages on usage restrictions and activities • Consultation for the ordinary drought order • Information on implementation of non-essential use, activities restricted, exemptions, compensation arrangements • Updates on regional and national water resource position • Implementation of ordinary drought order NEUB • Implement drought permits – stakeholder and regulator communications • Prepare for emergency drought order (EDO) 	Up to one week
All possible actions to avoid emergency drought orders (Trigger Level 3b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on regional and national water resource position • Environmental urgency, day zero type messaging • Impacts of rota cuts, standpipes • Explore extreme drought options – stakeholder engagement 	
Emergency Plan Invoked (Trigger Level 4)	Emergency Drought Order – National and Government-led messaging	28 days from application to Secretary of State

End of Drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and liaison on the relaxation/ withdrawal of any ban • Proactive water efficiency awareness and education • Thanks to customers for their efforts • Information on the effectiveness of measures and water savings 	Within one week
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Please note: this plan does not detail the process by which each status is triggered or the associated decision-making process.

Example details and channels

Drought Status Level	Messages	Audience	Channels/Platforms	Frequency
Normal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on our water resource situation <p>“Whilst our water resources are in healthy positions, hot and dry weather is anticipated over the next couple of weeks, and so we will be monitoring our supply levels.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive water efficiency awareness and education <p>“Making small changes to the way we use water is important for future sustainability.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Social media - Organic posts 	Monthly/weekly as required
Environmental Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on our water resource situation <p>“Our water resources are slightly below where they would normally be. We are managing our operations to address this. Please remember to use water wisely.”</p> <p>“Reducing your water use can help your local river flows.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Retailers • Regulators • Other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website - New page on temporary usage bans and what they mean • Updates to our water resources page • Social media - Organic posts - Boosted posts 	Weekly as required

	<p>“The dry weather means groundwater levels are low. Help us save water.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive water efficiency awareness and education <p>“Making small changes to the way we use water is important for future sustainability.”</p> <p>“When we experience long periods of hot weather, it puts pressure on the amount of water available. Making small changes to the ways we all use water can make a big difference.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leakage <p>“We are working hard to stop water from being wasted through leaks on our network. If you spot a leak in the road or on a footpath, report it to us.”</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct customer contact - Customer email 	
<p>Drought Monitoring (Trigger Level 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on our water resource situation <p>“The prolonged hot weather means our water resources are under pressure. We’re working with the Environment Agency on this developing situation. Please use water wisely.”</p> <p>“Water is a precious resource. If our water supplies continue to be put under pressure, we may have to implement a temporary use ban (TUB). Please use water wisely.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch to a water meter <p>“Switching to a water meter is one of the easiest ways to reduce your water bill, and by saving water, you help our environment.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Retailers • Regulators • Other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website - Message on our homepage - Updated page on TUBs and what it means - Updates to our water resources page • Social media - Organic posts - Boosted posts - Paid adverts • Direct customer contact - Customer email(s) - Press release 	<p>Every few days as the situation changes – weekly as a minimum</p>

	<p>“The majority of our customers who switch to a meter save at least £100 a year.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leakage <p>“Our teams are continuing to work hard to stop water from being wasted through leaks on our network. If you spot a leak in the road or on a footpath, report it to us.”</p> <p>“Please support us in increasing our leakage detection by reporting any leaks you see.”</p> <p>“We’re spending £xxm between 2025 and 2030 to upgrade xxxkm of pipeline infrastructure, creating a more resilient network to prevent leaks and the risk of bursts.”</p>			
<p>Drought Management (Trigger Level 2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary usage ban now in place <p>“To protect our region’s water supplies, we have introduced temporary use restrictions. These restrictions are essential to ensure that supplies can continue to be maintained for customers in our area.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on our water resource situation <p>“Our water resources are now exceptionally low.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal to reduce demand <p>“Help us to protect our water supplies by using water wisely at home. Everyone’s small actions can make a big difference.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water facts and figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Retailers • Regulators • Other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Message on our homepage - Updated page on TUBs and what it means. - Updates to our water resources page • Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organic posts - Boosted posts - Paid adverts • Video updates from executive team members • Press releases 	<p>Every few days and as required</p>

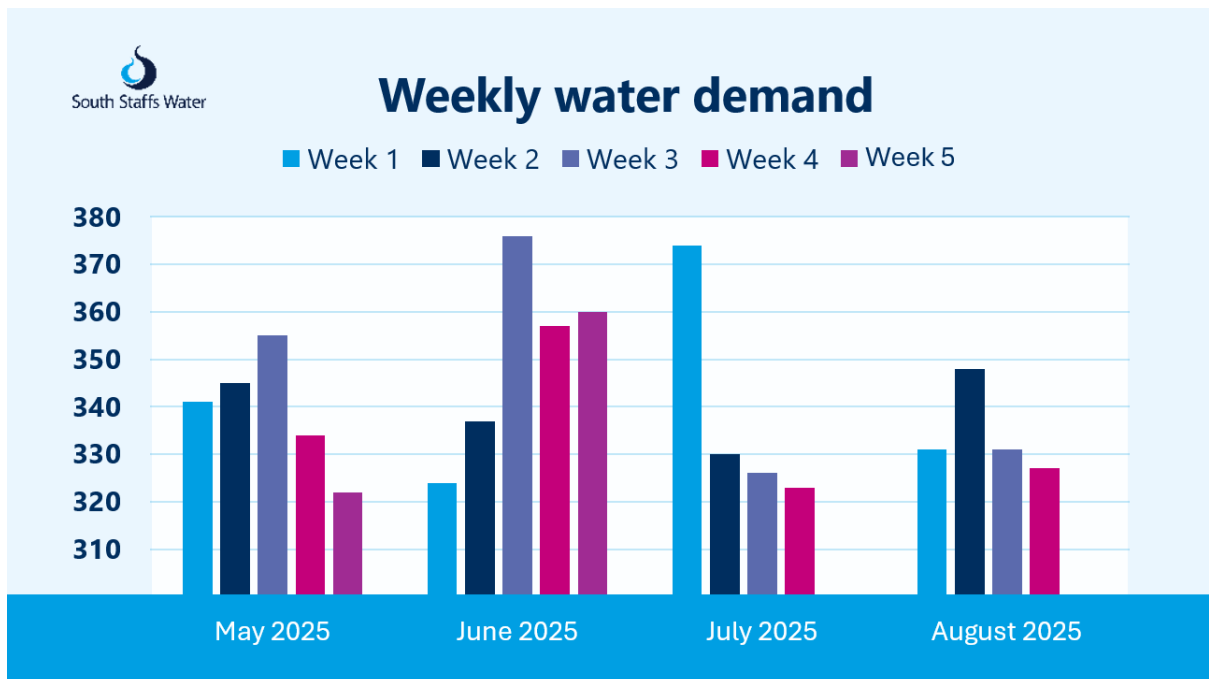
	<p>“A hosepipe uses 540 litres an hour, as much as a family of four uses in a day.”</p> <p>“A sprinkler left running overnight uses as much water as a family of four would use in one week.</p> <p>“A hosepipe ban can reduce water usage by 5-10% (according to research by UKWIR).”</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media interviews • Advertising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newspapers - Radio - Outdoor media - Local transport networks • TV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails to customers and retailers • Proactive communication with MPs and councillors • Co-ordinated approach with regional water resources groups and Water UK • Direct customer contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer email(s) - SMS text message(s) 	
<p>Severe Drought Management (Trigger Level 3a)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary usage ban remains in place • “Temporary usage restrictions remain in place in our region to protect our water supplies. Your continued cooperation will help us to maintain our supply to customers and protect our water resources.” • Updates on our water resource situation <p>“Due to the prolonged weather conditions, our water resources remain exceptionally low, and we are unlikely to be able to sustain supplies to all users in the short term.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal to reduce demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Retailers • Regulators • Other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Message on our homepage - Updated page on TUBs and what it means. - Updates to our water resources page • Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organic posts - Boosted posts - Paid adverts • Video updates from executive team members 	<p>Every few days, and as required</p>

	<p>“Help us to continue to protect our water supplies by using water wisely at home. Everyone’s small actions can make a big difference.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-emptive warning on emergency drought order - measures like standpipes may be required • Town messages to dramatically reduce PCC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • Media interviews • Advertising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newspapers - Radio - Outdoor media - Local transport networks • TV • • Emails to retailers • Proactive communication with MPs and councillors • Co-ordinated approach with regional water resources groups and Water UK • Direct customer contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer email(s) • SMS text message(s) 	
All possible actions to avoid emergency drought orders (Trigger Level 3b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on regional and national water resource position • Environmental urgency, day zero type messaging • Impacts of rota cuts, standpipes • Explore extreme drought options – stakeholder engagement • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Retailers • Regulators • Other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Trigger Level 3a 	Every few days, and as required
Emergency Plan Invoked	Emergency Drought Order – National and Government-led messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Retailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated approach with regional water resources group and Water UK 	As required

(Trigger Level 4)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulators Other organisations 		
End of Drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcement confirming the end of the drought Updates on our water resource situation “Our water resources are steadily getting healthier thanks to recent changes in the weather and the collective action taken by everyone. We will continue to monitor our supply levels over the coming weeks.” Proactive water efficiency awareness and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers Retailers Regulators Other organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Message on our homepage - Updated page on TUBs and what it means - Updates to our water resources page Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organic posts Press release Emails to retailers Proactive communication with MPs and councillors Co-ordinated approach with regional water resources group and Water UK Direct customer contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer email(s) - SMS text message(s) 	As required

Please note – each stage of our messaging will be repeated to employees through regular internal communications.

10. Examples



Example of the weekly water demand graph that is available and regularly updated on the South Staffs Water website



Support the environment whilst enjoying the sunshine

Over the last few weeks, we have been enjoying some lovely weather and the sunshine and warm temperatures are set to continue for a little longer. For many of us, this means spending some extra time in the garden and enjoying the outdoors. Often when we have hot weather, our water consumption increases as we use more to keep cool and to look after our plants. As a result, this can put pressure on our water resources and on the water that is left in our rivers, underground aquifers and reservoirs.

> [See where your water comes from](#)

How you can save water

Whilst we have detailed plans in place to manage our water resources, saving water, even in small ways, can help us to protect our supplies and the environment. Everyone's small changes can add up to a huge amount of water saved. For example, just over a million litres a day could add up to 100 million litres over 3 months - this would be enough water to fill 1.3 million bath tubs! If your home has a water meter, saving water not only helps to protect the environment, but it could also save you money on your bill! Here are a few simple ways you could save water at home.



Ditching the hose and switching to a watering can saves 145 litres of water. A garden hose, if used for over an hour, can use up to 1,000 litres. When it comes to watering your plants, watering them early in the morning or in the evening can also save water, as it limits the amount of water that is evaporated.





Dear Customer, The hot and dry weather over the last six months has had a significant impact on our water resources. Despite the unsettled weather last month, July was the fifth warmest on record, and follows on from the hottest and driest June since 1976, and the driest spring in more than 100 years. This combination of heat and sunshine, with very little rainfall, has created challenging conditions across the country for water resources.


[The East Midlands and West Midlands remain in drought](#), and with another heatwave now here, we all need to do our bit to make sure there is enough water to go around.

Every drop counts

We understand that water is an essential part of daily life, and we are not asking you to stop using it. However, there are some small changes that everyone can do which will make a big difference, especially when we all do them together.

- 

Switch from a hosepipe to a watering can
This can save as much water as a family of four uses in two days.
- 

Think twice before washing your car
Wait until the hot weather is over, or use a bucket and sponge instead.
- 

Let your lawn go brown
As soon as the rain returns, it will come back to life.

Excerpts from marketing emails sent to South Staffs Water customers


**YES
WE
CAM**

**MAKE
ONE SMALL
CHANGE**

SAVE OUR CHALK STREAMS

Cambridgeshire's precious chalk streams are as unique as the Great Barrier Reef. But they're under threat – and you can help save them.

Make one small change to your everyday water habits and you'll be a crucial part of our county's biggest ever water-saving action.




JOIN NOW →

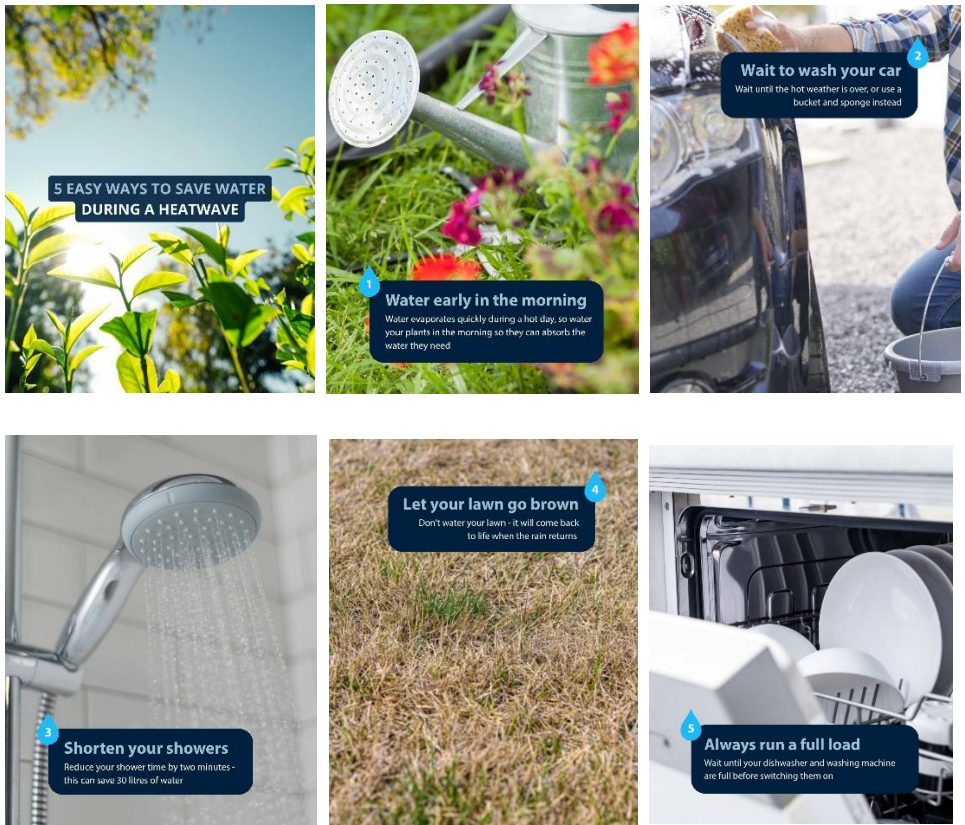
**CHOOSE AN EASY
WATER-SAVING PLEDGE**

All you need to do is make one easy water-saving pledge and stick to it over the next few months. There's 6 to choose from – just pick the one that best suits your lifestyle.

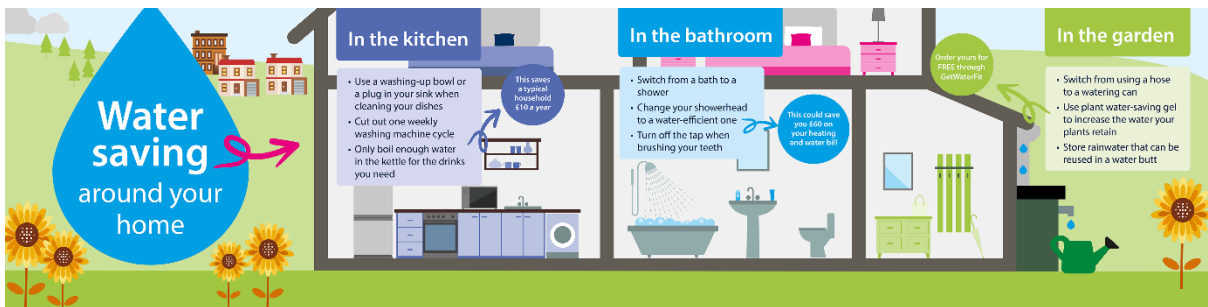
CHOOSE YOUR PLEDGE →



Excerpt from a marketing email sent to Cambridge Water customers during the Yes We Cam campaign



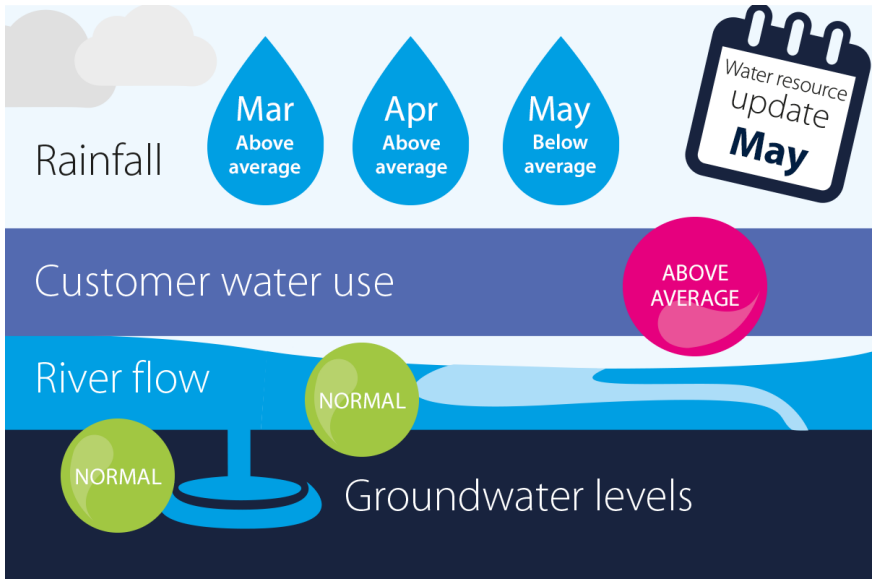
Examples of social media graphics on how to save water during a heatwave



Examples of social media infographics on how to save water at home



Examples of social media graphics with tips on water-saving



An example of a water resource infographic that we share on our website and social media channels

11. Considerations

It is important that we tailor our communications to our different types of customer.

The Consumer Council for Water's report on consistent messaging (published in 2023) highlights how messages need to be relevant to customers - for example, those who have gardens or those who have meters. It's important that whilst we highlight the importance water saving has on our resources, we bridge their knowledge of the effect it can have on the environment, and potentially their water bills.

Tailoring our communications is particularly important to those who are vulnerable.

Our Priority Services Register (PSR) supports customers who have a medical, learning or physical disability, or experiencing financial difficulty. This includes those who require water for medical conditions, customers with visual or hearing impairments and customers living with a cognitive development condition or dementia.

The register enables us to identify households with additional communication needs and get in touch with those customers using the most appropriate method, to ensure they are aware of and fully understand the situation.

These communications will be utilised in the event of needing to implement temporary use restrictions and will help to ensure those customers understand what the restrictions mean, and, more importantly, in which cases they will be exempt.

Most activities restricted under temporary use bans (TUBs) have associated exemptions for health and safety reasons. In many cases, this includes use by customers on our PSR.

In our communications, we will review content to ensure messages are easily understood. We will implement measures to make our content more accessible – for example, adding alternative text to images or infographics we share digitally. We will also consider alternative ways to reach households, through partners or community organisations.

12. Measuring success

The drought situation and the effectiveness of our communication measures will be regularly monitored throughout the normal and enhanced communication process, and decisions to develop or modify successive actions will be made accordingly by the Drought Management Team.

Coupled with water demand levels and water usage in our regions, we will gather insight from our different platforms.

ACTIVITY	MEASUREMENT
Social media	Impressions, views (video content), clicks, click-through rate, reactions, comments, reposts, engagement rate, increase in followers, referrals to web links
Web content	Visitors to page(s) including engaged visits, bounce rate, average time spent on page/site, clicks, downloads, contact form submissions, referral sources
Video content	Views, comments, reactions, shares, number of contacts generated
Literature	Views, visit duration, top pages (and how many times they were hit), source, interactions (downloads or video views), number of contacts generated
Emails	Emails opened, clicks, click-through rate, responses, unsubscribe rate, customer rating and verbatim comments
Surveys	Completions, feedback
Press releases	AVE, reach, number of contacts generated, sentiment
Advertising	Reach/impressions, clicks (digital only), number of contacts generated