



Consultation on 'Drought: how it is managed in England'

The updated national drought response framework

October 2024

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment.

We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

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Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

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Foreword

The Environment Agency has a duty to safeguard water resources in England and make sure there is enough water for people and the environment. We do this by:

- regulating the abstraction of water
- monitoring the environment
- working with the water industry and other abstractors to ensure they manage their water supplies effectively

We monitor, assess, report and act to minimise the impact of drought on the environment, whilst balancing the needs of people and business.

The 'Drought: how it is managed in England' document is the updated version of the 'National Drought Response Framework' released in 2017. It describes:

- how drought affects England
- how the Environment Agency works with government, water companies and others to manage the effects on people, business and the environment

Each of the Environment Agency's 14 operational areas also produce their own area drought plans, which serve as operational guidelines for their response to drought. The 'Drought: how it is managed in England' document supports the area drought plans by providing:

- a strategic overview for how we manage a drought to minimise damage to the environment, agriculture and to secure essential public water supply
- information for our staff, government departments and stakeholders to use in planning for and managing drought

This consultation will help us to gather feedback and input on the document, and to draw out any area-specific concerns that should be considered by our operational areas as they update their area drought plans.

What we are consulting on

Our changing climate means we will see more extreme weather in the coming years – droughts are likely to become more frequent and more severe. The drought of 2022 showed just how quickly the environment, agriculture, public water supply, navigation and all society can be affected by drought.

We need to incorporate lessons from the past and ensure our strategic overview of drought management in England remains up to date. and our area drought plans put us in the best position to respond to the next drought. We would like to hear:

- your feedback and suggestions on the 'Drought: how it is managed in England' document
- your views and comments on how we respond to drought issues at a local level

Scope of comments

We will consider comments that are related to:

- the 'Drought: how it is managed in England' document
- local drought management and issues as outlined in the questions

For other concerns outside of this, please email the National Customer Contact Centre at enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk and they will forward these to the appropriate team.

Responding to this consultation

Important dates

This consultation will start on **8 November 2024** and end on **10 January 2025**.

How to respond

View the document and respond to the questions online on the Environment Agency's [Citizen Space consultations website](#).

Respond online

Please submit your response using the Citizen Space website, as it helps us to:

- gather and summarise responses quickly, accurately and in one place
- reduce the costs of the consultations by avoiding unnecessary printing

Respond by email

If you prefer, you can submit your response by email to drought.national@environment-agency.gov.uk using the response form included with this consultation on Citizen Space. Please email your response form with the subject header of 'Consultation response: drought management framework'.

Ask for a printed version

Please contact us if you would like a printed version of the consultation document sent to you.

You can do this by contacting:

National Customer Contact Centre

Telephone: 03708 506 506

Minicom for the hard of hearing: 03702 422 549

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Data protection

How we will use your information

We will use your information to help shape 'Drought: how it is managed in England'.

The Environment Agency will make all responses publicly available after the consultation, unless you have specifically requested that we keep your response confidential.

This includes comments received online, by email and by post unless you have specifically requested that we keep your response confidential. We will not publish names of individuals or personal data. We will publish the name of the organisation for those responses made on behalf of organisations.

We will not respond individually to responses unless you have specifically asked us to do so by providing us with an email address, in which case we will acknowledge your response. After the consultation has closed, we will publish a consultation response document on GOV.UK. We will contact you to let you know when this is available.

In line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we may be required to publish your response to this consultation but will not include any personal information. If you have requested your response be kept confidential, we may still be required to provide a summary of it.

Privacy notice

The Environment Agency would like to keep you informed about the outcomes of the consultation. If you would like to receive an email acknowledging your response and telling you when we have published the consultation response document, please provide your email address with your response.

By giving us your email address, you consent for us to email you about the consultation. We will keep your details until we have notified you of the response document publication.

We will not share your details with any other third party without your clear and full consent, unless required to do so by law.

You can withdraw your consent to receive these emails at any time by contacting us at drought.national@environment-agency.gov.uk.

The Environment Agency is the data controller for the personal data you provide. For more information on how we deal with your personal data please see our [personal information charter](#) on GOV.UK.

Please contact the Data Protection team at dataprotection@environment-agency.gov.uk for more information.

Consultation principles

We are running this consultation in accordance with the guidance set out in the government's [consultation principles](#).

If you have any queries or complaints about the way this consultation has been carried out (the process), please email consultation.enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Otherwise, for all other queries relating to this consultation please email drought.national@environment-agency.gov.uk

What happens next

Once the consultation closes, we will publish a consultation response document on GOV.UK within 12 weeks of the consultation close date.

We will use the responses to help refine the 'Drought: how it is managed in England' document. We aim to have our final version published on GOV.UK and viewable in early 2025. We will also consider any feedback on local issues when updating our area drought plans in early 2025.

Consultation questions

Question 1. Before reading 'Drought: how it is managed in England', how familiar would you say you were about drought management in England?

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Not at all
- b) A little
- c) Somewhat
- d) Moderately
- e) Very

Question 2. Refer to Section 1: 'Drought in England: an overview'. Does this section clearly describe drought in England?

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Prefer not to answer

Why do you think this?

Question 3. Refer to Section 2: 'Drought impacts and mitigations'. Does this section clearly describe the impacts of drought and some of the actions other sectors take to mitigate these impacts?

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Prefer not to answer

Why do you think this?

Commented [YG1]: [Collingwood, Graham](#) I'd normally suggest you add the individual sections before each of the questions relating to them so that stakeholders don't have to switch between the Con Doc and Drought Doc - as this isn't particularly accessible. However, it may be worth you linking to the relevant section in the Drought doc and linking it in such a way that the link opens the document up in a new window. That way, your stakeholders should be able to flick between the two documents with a bit more ease.

Commented [GC2]: [link](#)

Commented [GC3]: [link](#)

Question 4. Refer to Section 3: 'Planning, management and response'. Does this section clearly describe the responsibilities of the Environment Agency, government, public bodies, regulators, water companies and local responders in drought planning, management and response?

Commented [GC4]: link

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Prefer not to answer

Why do you think this?

Question 5. Refer to Section 4: 'Our drought teams and actions'. Does this section clearly describe the Environment Agency's drought stages, response arrangements, drought actions and triggers, monitoring and data?

Commented [GC5]: Link

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Prefer not to answer

Why do you think this?

Question 6. Considering your responses to questions 4 and 5, how well do you understand the scope and purpose of Environment Agency area drought plans described in sections 3 and 4?

Please choose one of the following:

- f) Not at all
- g) A little
- h) Somewhat
- i) Moderately
- j) Very

Why do you think this?

Question 7. Refer to Section 5: 'How we communicate with others'. Does this section clearly describe the Environment Agency's role in drought communications and the tools we use to do so?

Commented [GC6]: link

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Prefer not to answer

Why do you think this?

Question 8. Refer to Section 6: 'Recovery'. Does this section clearly describe the Environment Agency's role in recovery and how we seek to learn from each drought?

Commented [GC7]: link

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neither agree nor disagree
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree
- f) Prefer not to answer

Why do you think this?

Question 9. After reading 'Drought: how it is managed in England' and answering these questions, are there any inaccuracies you would like to highlight or any other suggested improvements you would like to make?

Question 10. After reading 'Drought: how it is managed in England' and answering these questions, do you have a better understanding of how droughts are managed in England, the respective roles of the organisations and groups involved, and how they work together to minimise the impacts of drought?

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Not at all
- b) A little
- c) Somewhat
- d) Moderately
- e) Much

Why do you think this?

Question 11. Which Environment Agency operational areas are you most interested in with respect to drought?

A map of the Environment Agency's operational areas can be found at: [Environment Agency area and region operational locations](#).

Select any that apply:

- a) All (National)
- b) North East
- c) Cumbria and Lancashire
- d) Yorkshire
- e) Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire
- f) Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire
- g) East Midlands
- h) West Midlands
- i) Wessex
- j) Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- k) Solent and South Downs
- l) London
- m) East Anglia
- n) Thames
- o) Kent, South London and East Sussex
- p) Hertfordshire and North London
- q) Prefer not to answer

Question 12. What are your thoughts about how drought has been managed in your local area?

Question 13. Do you have any specific concerns about local environmental drought impacts that you would like us to know about?

Question 14. How engaged did you feel with the Environment Agency and other stakeholders during the last period of prolonged dry weather or drought?

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Not at all
- b) A little
- c) Somewhat
- d) Moderately
- e) Very
- f) Prefer not to answer

Why do you think this?

Question 15. How do you think the Environment Agency and others can better work together during prolonged dry weather and drought?

Additional questions

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Individual response
- b) Response on behalf of an organisation or group (for example, charity, not-for-profit organisation, trading body)
- c) Other

If you selected (b), what is the name of the organisation or group? For example, business, environmental group etc.

If you selected 'other', please explain your area of interest.

What sector do you represent?

Please choose one of the following:

- a) Government and regulators
- b) Environment
- c) Agriculture and horticulture
- d) Public water supply
- e) Navigation
- f) Recreation
- g) Energy
- h) Business
- i) Industry
- j) Other

If you selected 'other', please tell us your sector.

What is your email address?

By giving us your email address, you consent for us to email you about the consultation. We will keep your details until we have notified you of the response document publication.

We will not share your details with any other third party without your clear and full consent, unless required to do so by law.

You can withdraw your consent to receive these emails at any time by contacting us at drought.national@environment-agency.gov.uk

Email:

Can we publish your response? We will not include personal information.

This is a required question. Please select one of the following:

- a) Yes
- b) No

If you answered 'No', please tell us why as we will need to understand this when responding to any freedom of information requests.

Would you like to find out more about us or your environment?

Then call us on

03708 506 506 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Or visit our website

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

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0800 807060 (24 hours)

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Environment first

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