River basin planning: Significant Water Management Issues consultation

20 November 2025 to 20 May 2026

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

Contents

Overview 4
Water Story 6
Challenge 1: Climate change 7
Challenge 2: Changes to water levels and flows 9
Challenge 3: Chemicals in the water environment 11
Challenge 4: Invasive non-native species 17
Challenge 5: Physical modifications 19
Challenge 6: Pollution from agriculture and rural sector 21
Challenge 7: Pollution from towns, cities and transport 23
Challenge 8: Pollution from water industry wastewater 24
Pollution for abandoned mines - South West and Northumbria River Basin Districts 27
State of nature decline 28
Local Partnerships 32
Supporting information 34
Evidence 36
About you 38

Overview

We urgently need to protect and improve our waters and find a better balance that meets the needs of people and nature.

Water keeps us alive, drives our economy and sustains wildlife.

Our rivers, lakes, canals, coasts and groundwater, and the essential services they provide society, are worth billions of pounds to the UK economy.

However, wildlife and the benefits we get from our waters are threatened by the damage we are causing through development, industry, flood protection and agriculture. The climate crisis is adding to these pressures and without concerted action will lead to irreparable harm to our planet, ourselves and future generations.

This consultation covers all the river basin districts (RBDs) that are entirely in England, and the Severn and Northumbria RBDs which lie partly in Wales and Scotland respectively. The data and information presented in the main body of this report is for England only. Further information on RBDs, including the management of significant water management issues across Wales, can be found in the Supporting Information section of the consultation.

Why we are consulting

We are seeking your views on the significant water management issues which present challenges to the health of our water environment.

By responding to this consultation, you will be helping to shape the management of the water environment. The information gathered through this consultation will help us update the current river basin management plans

Over the next two years we will be reviewing and updating river basin management plans. This will include reviewing and updating the environmental objectives for every water body and the programmes of measures needed to achieve those objectives.

Legislation requires that the updated plans and programmes of measures for each river basin district will be published by 22 December 2027.

The Significant Water Management Issues consultation is an important step in this process. We are seeking your views on what needs to be done to tackle the significant issues affecting the water environment.

We will use your responses to help us consider how some of the current approaches to the management of water will need to change in response to a changing climate.

- A glossary of the terms used in this consultation is available on the River basin planning online glossary
- For information and data about your local area, visit the catchment data explorer

Navigating the consultation

This consultation has a section dedicated to each of the significant water management issues. Each section has a summary, links to more detailed information and questions we would like your feedback on. You do not have to respond to all questions. Only respond to those that you'd like us to consider your feedback. The Environment Agency have determined the significant management issues with partners based on data analysis, which is detailed in the Evidence section of the consultation. If you think we have overlooked a significant issue, let us know by answering the question in that section.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Reports

Alongside this consultation we have also published Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Reports on Gov.uk. Strategic environmental assessment is a process that ensures consideration is given to the environment during the development of certain plans and programmes. These reports set out the approach that will be taken for the SEAs in each river basin district in the update to the RBMPs. There are 2 questions on these reports in the Supporting information section of this consultation.

Responding to this consultation

The consultation will close at midnight on Wednesday 20 May 2026. We will consider all responses received by this date.

We would like you to submit your response using our online consultation tool, as this provides an easy and efficient way to respond. It will also help us to:

- gather all responses in one place
- summarise responses quickly and accurately
- reduce the cost of the consultation

If you do not wish to respond using the online tool, you can request a response form from rbmpenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk. You can submit your response to the same email address.

You can alternatively send it via post to:

Dave Trewolla, RBMP Programme Manager, Environment Agency, Sir John Moore House, Victoria Square, Bodmin, PL31 1EB.

Water Story

Water connects all life on Earth. Every person, community, and ecosystem depends on clean water to survive. For millions of years, it has shaped our planet, cycling through the air, land, and oceans to sustain life. We rely on it every day to drink, grow food, power our homes, and keep nature alive.

Pollution once severely damaged many rivers, and although stronger regulations, cleaner industries, and investment have brought improvements, only 16% of England's waters currently achieve Good Ecological Status /Potential - meaning they are close to their natural state. Climate change, combined with population growth and economic pressures, is increasing strain on this vital resource. Our water system is under pressure.

We need faster, smarter and more joined-up action to improve our waters and secure long-term resilience. Everyone has a role to play, from individuals and communities to businesses and government. At its core, we need a commitment to holistic, system-wide thinking, recognising the interconnectedness of water, land, climate, and society.

The river basin management plans play an important role in setting out how we can work together to restore rivers, lakes, and coasts, and your views through this consultation will help shape them. Protecting water means acting now to ensure it remains clean, healthy, and sustainable for future generations. We all share the goal of a resilient, fair, and regenerative water future - built on science, collaboration, and shared ambition. Together, we can turn today's challenges into opportunities for people, nature, and generations to come.

Challenge 1: Climate change

Climate change is happening now. As the world's climate changes, here in England we will experience hotter and drier summers, warmer and wetter winters, rising sea levels and more frequent extreme events like heavy rain, floods and heat waves. This has many implications for our rivers, groundwater, wetlands and coasts, and how they are managed. Climate change is a challenge that will be with us for many years to come regardless of global action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. This is because significant quantities of these gases are already in the atmosphere, locking us into continued change.

We need to make sure that there is enough water for domestic and business requirements while not compromising the water needs of the environment: climate change is altering river flows and water availability. The amount of water available by 2050 could be reduced by 10-15%, with some rivers seeing 50-80% less water during the summer months. This reduction will be compounded by increased variability in both rainfall intensity and where it falls. Meanwhile we expect population and economic growth to increase water demand significantly.

It will be increasingly difficult to achieve good water quality: climate change creates additional pressure by altering how chemicals and contaminants behave and move through the environment. More intense and heavy rainfall can overwhelm water treatment infrastructure and flush contaminants into watercourses. It can also wash sediments and contaminants from urban areas, contaminated land, and farmland into rivers and streams. Sea level rise can lead to saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers, while rising temperatures will increase the mobility, persistence and toxicity of some chemicals in the environment, so that they present a greater risk. These effects are compounded during dry spells when there is less water in watercourses to dilute any contaminants.

Restoring, protecting, and enhancing habitats from source-to-sea (including peatlands, wetlands, chalk streams, and saltmarshes) and maintaining fisheries will become more challenging: Climate change will affect species and habitats through impacts on water quality, temperature, river flows, groundwater recharge, extreme events, saltwater intrusion, invasive species, erosion, sedimentation and soil health. Temperature-sensitive species, such as migratory salmonids, eel, lamprey, white-clawed crayfish, and rare insects like mayflies, caddis flies, and stoneflies will be negatively affected. Increased temperatures and changing flow regimes will threaten chalk stream species, with salmonid egg survival likely to be compromised at over 85% of sites by 2080.

As our climate changes we will increasingly look towards nature and nature-based solutions to reduce hazards: nature can store and slow the movement of water and create cooler environments therefore helping us to manage risks and adapt to an uncertain future.

We need to help the water environment become more resilient and adapt to climate change by:

- Restoring rivers, wetlands and coasts to a more natural state and creating more wetland habitat
- Taking action to protect water resources, water quality, and wildlife from both current and future pressures
- Taking account of changing climate risks in all environmental planning and land use decisions

We also have to help prevent the worst impacts of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and absorbing carbon through sequestration.

For further information on this challenge see:

- The Environment Agency's 4th Adaptation Report: Climate Resilience for a Better Environment (2025)
- The Climate Change Committee's latest report to parliament on progress in adapting to climate change (2025)
- The Climate Change Committee's 3rd Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk Technical Report (2021)
- The Climate Change Committee's 3rd Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk Advice Report (2021)

Climate change is happening and, to plan effectively to protect and improve England's waters, everyone involved in developing and implementing environmental plans needs to be well-supported to take robust account of both the implications of a changing climate and the potential to exacerbate releases of greenhouse gases.

Question 1: What do you think is most needed to support environmental planners to make informed decisions to deliver measures in the context of climate change? Please select one option and tell us why in the box below:

☐Open-access datasets to make it easier to use future information in risk assessments and planning activity (please specify below which data you feel are needed but not already available or not accessible in a usable format)

☐Bespoke products and guidance (please explain using the free text box below)

☐Training, perhaps aligned to a competency framework, to help environmental planners deepen their knowledge of climate change and skills

☐Legislation to set out precisely when and how climate change should be considered in environmental plans (please use free text box to suggest how prescriptive this should be)

Please tell us why:

Challenge 2: Changes to water levels and flows

There are areas where we are taking too much water from our rivers and aquifers.

of surface water bodies are over-abstracted

of chalk river water bodies are impacted by abstraction

Water taken from rivers and aquifers supplies homes, farms and businesses and enables economic growth. As the climate changes and our population grows, our demand for water will also grow.

In some areas we now take more water from our rivers and groundwater than is naturally available. Across England around 15% of rivers and 27% of groundwater bodies have levels of abstraction that is considered unsustainable and may not support a healthy environment. This impacts rivers, springs, aquifers, lakes and wetlands, reducing the habitat where wildlife can live. It becomes more difficult for fish to reach the places they feed, mate and lay their eggs (their spawning grounds).

Without action, number of litres a day shortfall for public water supplies by 2055

27% of groundwater bodies are at poor status - 0.9 million cubic metres of water per day are needed to recover to good status

Lower water levels also reduce the numbers and health of other wildlife that rely on high enough water levels to move around. As a result, many of our rivers cannot sustain a healthy environment for fish, insects and plants. This is made worse as water levels drop because the polluting chemicals washed into rivers from soils and roads do more damage because they are less diluted.

100 million cubic metres of water have been returned to the environment

1870 million cubic metres of water have been recovered from abstraction licences to remove risk of deterioration

We can prevent more deterioration or reverse the damage that has already been done by reducing the amount of water taken from the environment. We can reduce the amount of water we use in homes, farms and businesses. We can remove structures

from rivers which are no longer needed, and which affect the natural flow of water. For further information on this challenge see the Water levels and flows: challenges for the water environment document.

The Water Resource National Framework 2025 outlines the necessary short and long-term reductions in unsustainable water abstraction to meet water body environmental objectives and manage water within and between river basin districts. Achieving these reductions will take time as new water supply infrastructure, such as reservoirs, will need to be built. In the meantime, to protect and improve the environment, we will need to prioritise reducing unsustainable abstraction.

Question 2: What criteria should we consider when deciding where to prioritise abstraction reductions?

Challenge 3: Chemicals in the water environment

Every sector of society uses chemicals. Synthetic and naturally occurring chemicals are used to make everyday items such as medicines, cosmetics, household cleaning and personal care products, paints, textiles, plastics, toys, carpets, pesticides and fertilisers. Chemicals have always been an essential part of life, but an increase in the quantity and variety of synthetic chemicals has resulted in releases to the environment because of the way they are produced, used and disposed of.

According to the United Nations' Global Framework of Chemicals, the worldwide market for chemicals is predicted to double between 2017 and 2030 (United Nations Environment Programme, 2019). An increase in the number of chemicals in use by society as a whole is likely to increase the number of chemicals present in the environment. Managing chemicals so their production and use is environmentally sustainable, and so they continue to provide benefits to society, will be increasingly challenging as more new chemicals are used.

- The number of pharmaceutical prescription items dispensed in England in 2024/25 was 1.26 billion, an increase of 4% from 2023/24. Source: NHSBSA

The presence of a chemical in the environment is not automatically a cause for concern. For a chemical to pose a risk of harm it must both be present in the environment and have a high level of hazard due to its intrinsic properties. For example, biocides or pesticides are intentionally toxic to the organisms they are intended to control, in order to be effective.

We must regularly re-assess the picture of risk as it is ever-growing and developing. For example, some historically used chemicals were considered benign at the time, but later research discovered environmental impacts from long-term exposure.

Through a variety of sources and pathways, chemicals find their way into water, air and soil. Urban drainage, wastewater treatment, the application of biosolids to agricultural land, and waste handling are important human-influenced pathways for chemicals to reach the environment. Some chemicals may travel long distances from their source through atmospheric transport or in water, and they may have effects outside their country of origin or use. Chemicals in the environment can alter soil and water chemistry, have harmful effects on exposed ecological communities, and biomagnify up the food chain, increasing the risk of harm to top predators including humans. It is therefore important to properly control the use of chemicals to protect environmental and public health.

Managing the risks from chemicals in the environment is complex. There are many aspects to consider, including:

- physical and chemical properties
- the amount of the chemical in use

- use types
- breakdown products
- pathways into the environment
- the sensitivity of exposed ecosystems

Chemicals can be managed individually or in groups, and on a local or national level through a variety of methods, from source controls such as use restrictions and abatement, to guidance on appropriate use and disposal, to remediation of contaminated matrices. The number of chemicals in use means that we, the Environment Agency, need to take a strategic, risk-based approach, prioritising and focusing on those that pose the highest risk to the environment. Our Prioritisation and Early Warning System (PEWS) for chemicals allows us to identify these chemicals of concern.

We use concentration thresholds for individual chemicals in the environment, below which the environment is protected from adverse effects. These thresholds are Environmental Quality Standards (EQS). As part of the River Basin Management Planning process, we measure and assess the quality of the aquatic environment against EQSs. In our most recent assessment, we found most chemicals were usually detected at levels below their EQS.

EQSs can be set within the water column or within animal tissue (biota EQS). A handful of substances that are ubiquitous, persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (uPBTs) exceed their biota EQSs across England. These pollutants are already recognised as international priorities and are highly regulated. In many cases, emissions have declined significantly and the levels we observe today are strongly influenced by the legacy of past chemical use. Achieving further reductions will not be easy.

- We have 154 surface water Safeguard Zones and 256 groundwater Safeguard Zones – areas around public water supplies where extra pollution control measures are in place to protect drinking water.
- 4/5 of the neonicotinoid pesticides we monitor have declined since 2020.

Pharmaceuticals often end up in rivers as we excrete them or their breakdown by-products. Some are present at levels that may cause effects on aquatic organisms, including those that result in anti-microbial resistance and endocrine disruption.

Fipronil and imidacloprid are chemicals that are banned for use as pesticides but are still used as veterinary medicines. They are used to treat fleas and ticks on companion animals (cats and dogs).

Our monitoring data has detected fipronil in 95% of our water samples and imidacloprid in over 65% of water samples. Both substances are harmful to some aquatic organisms at very low levels. The concentrations we are measuring are likely to be having an impact on sensitive species in our rivers. This is an example where topically applied

treatments result in an environmental impact. This impact could be managed and reduced through education to inform different choices as well as development of better alternatives.

We, the Environment Agency, are a member of the Pharmaceuticals in the Environment (PiE) group, a UK cross government committee. We work with partner organisations to develop strategies to reduce environmental contamination by these chemicals. The PiE group has recently published a roadmap of activities to address the levels of fipronil and imidacloprid detected in UK waterways. These activities include action at multiple levels of society, utilising multiple potential stakeholders.

The UK Pesticides National Action Plan 2025 sets targets for pesticide reduction by 2030 and uses integrated pest management incentives to encourage a more diverse range of pest management practices. The Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) programme began in 2006-2007. CSF has provided tailored advice to over 28,000 farms representing 4.4 million hectares or 49% of the farmed area of England.

Between 2006 and 2018, CSF advice led to a 4-12% reduction in agricultural pollutant losses (average across Phase 1 Target Areas), although local catchment specific reductions have been much higher. The next CSF evaluation report is due to be published later in 2025.

A time lag is to be expected between regulatory actions leading to reductions in chemical concentrations, and again before ecological change is seen. Additional factors such as habitat loss and land use changes may limit ecological improvements.

Climate change is likely to be influencing ecological health and the release of chemicals into the environment. As the climate changes, heavier rainfall is washing more chemicals into our rivers and streams from sewers, roads and the land. In drier spells, less dilution is available in rivers meaning concentrations of some chemicals increases.

Crop diseases are changing with climate, requiring more or new types of pest management. An increase in fungicides in water has already been detected. Furthermore, to address increasing water demands caused by climate change, population increases and the need to reduce over-abstraction, water transfers and water recycling schemes will be required. These schemes introduce the risk of transferring local chemical pollution issues to other parts of the country.

One of the uPBTs that are causing widespread EQS failures is perfluoroctane sulfonate (PFOS), a chemical that was formerly used in everyday products such as stain repellents. PFOS is a member of a group of chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), often referred to as “forever chemicals”.

The management of PFOS is a challenge. PFOS does not break down under natural conditions and is difficult to remove using conventional water treatment. It is toxic and build ups through the food chain. Most uses of PFOS have been phased out or

restricted. However, legacy contamination remains in the environment and PFOS is frequently detected in our rivers, estuaries and coastal areas. Environment Agency surface water monitoring has found PFOS in all fish sampled from fresh, estuarine and coastal waters around England.

- Since 2021, the Environment Agency has analysed over 11,000 water samples for PFAS from 3,000 locations in England.
- Over time we have expanded our PFAS monitoring to include over 60 different PFAS.

Successful management actions have resulted in decreasing trends of other chemicals. For example, triclosan, an anti-microbial additive, is now banned in cosmetic products. Monitoring by the UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR) Chemicals Investigation Programme (CIP) shows a notable decrease in concentrations from an annual average of 0.2 µg/l in 2013 to 0.006 µg/l in 2025. Levels in the environment are now well below the EQS. This demonstrates how effective source control measures can reduce concentrations of chemicals in the environment.

The Environment Agency continues to work internationally to support sustainable chemicals management and take nationally co-ordinated actions to reduce levels of the most widespread chemicals. Looking forward, local solutions to local problems will also be vital. Catchment based solutions may contribute to the management of chemicals.

The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 sets out an ambition to halt the decline in our biodiversity so plants and wildlife can thrive, exposure to chemicals and pesticides is managed, and water is clean and plentiful. This presents an opportunity to consider societal challenges for the future use of chemicals.

Some societal challenges include common behaviours such as product marketing and consumer choices. Influencing these choices has been shown to alter behaviours resulting in better chemical outcomes. For example, public awareness campaigns highlighting the risks of bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical used in plastics and known to disrupt endocrine processes, has resulted in changes in producer behaviour.

'BPA free' indicators are now featured prominently on the packaging of consumer products like water bottles, baby bottles and toys. This has influenced consumer behaviour to select 'BPA free' options. However, it is important to minimise the likelihood of regrettable substitution, when a chemical with known hazards is replaced with a different chemical that has different or unknown hazards, in the future. Public awareness campaigns might also include how to promote sustainable design of products, efficient use of resources and encouraging recycling and safe use and disposal. This will mean society can continue to reap the benefits of chemicals whilst ensuring a healthy environment for future generations.

- There are 733 distinct actions for the nine sewerage and water companies in England to enact to tackle chemical issues in the 2025-2030 Water Industry National Environment Plans (WINEP), with an anticipated overall cost of £387 million (Ofwat final PR24 determination)
- The 733 distinct actions in the WINEP are expected to lead to improvement or protection from chemical issues to 850km of river

For further information on this challenge see the Chemicals: challenges for the water environment document.

For further information on the pressures associated with this challenge the following Challenges for the water environment documents provide more detailed information around this issue:

- Cypermethrin: challenges for the water environment
- Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS): challenges for the water environment
- Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs): challenges for the water environment
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs): challenges for the water environment
- Mercury: challenges for the water environment
- Drinking water protected areas: challenges for the water environment

And also:

- Global Chemicals Outlook II - From Legacies to Innovative Solutions: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Synthesis Report 2019

We hope the information provided here has been helpful and improved your understanding of the challenge posed by the chemicals in the water environment. Having read this information, we would appreciate your feedback on the following questions:

Question 3: What more could we do to provide you with information and materials to help you understand the challenge posed by the chemicals in the water environment?

Question 4: What action do you intend to take, if any, in tackling the challenge posed by chemicals in the water environment (e.g. influencing others, communicating the problem to others, changing your behaviour)?

Would this action be community level, or as an individual?

☐ Individual

☐ Community

Please provide details:

Question 5: If there any citizen science initiatives you feel could support this area of work, please provide details

Question 6: What additional action do you think public bodies need to take to regulate or address chemicals in the environment to achieve environmental objectives?

Challenge 4: Invasive non-native species

Invasive Non-Native Species or INNS are species that have been introduced to a place where they do not originate from. Most of these are harmless, but 10-15% have the ability to spread and cause harm to the environment, the economy or our health and way of life.

INNS cost Britain approximately £1.9 billion per year, this can be through damage to infrastructure, losses to production and loss of other activities like recreation. Japanese knotweed can grow through pavements, and quagga mussels can block water pipes.

INNS have health and social effects too, giant hogweed can cause UV sensitivities, where exposure to sunlight results in blistering. Floating pennywort can cause flooding and make waterways unusable.

INNS also have ecological impacts and are thought to be one of the biggest causes of biodiversity loss. Over 70% of water bodies in England are at risk of deterioration because of the impacts of invasive non-native species.

The best management for INNS is prevention, as once a species is established it can be almost impossible to eradicate. Fortunately you can do your bit to prevent the spread of INNS in three simple steps: Check, Clean Dry - Help stop the spread of invasive plants and animals in our waters!

Invasive non-native species put pressure on animal and plant habitats that are already damaged, fragmented and weakened by pollution and habitat destruction. It's important to understand where invasive non-native species are stopping the water environment from improving and how to help the water environment cope with their impacts.

Since the last update to the river basin management plans were published, there have been a number of new targets and initiatives that directly support action on invasive non-native species. Defra's Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) has specific targets for the water environment that depend on managing the pressure from invasive non-native species; in addition there are specific EiP goals to enhance biosecurity. The Convention on Biological Diversity's Global Biodiversity Framework has a specific target to reduce the introduction of invasive non-native species by 50% by 2030 and minimise their impact.

Action to address the challenges posed by invasive non-native species is best achieved by working in partnership with others, both in catchments and nationally. Water companies in England are investing over £40 million to address the impacts of invasive non-native species and prevent future of deterioration of the water environment.

For further information on this challenge, see the Invasive non-native species: challenges for the water environment document.

For further information on the pressures associated with this challenge the following Challenges for the water environment documents provide more detailed information around this issue:

- Phosphorus: challenges for the water environment
- Nitrates: challenges for the water environment
- State of nature decline: challenges for the water environment

If you have read the further information about this issue, you may like to answer the questions below:

Question 7: Are there any barriers stopping you adopting good biosecurity when you are in or near water?

Question 8: Do you think that our approach to invasive non-native species is appropriate?

Question 9: Please share any challenges or good experiences relating to prevention, control, eradication and management:

Challenge 5: Physical modifications

Modifications remain one of the most widespread and long-lasting pressures on the water environment. These include floodplains disconnected from rivers and estuaries, channels straightened or rivers and coasts encroached upon, remnant coastal defences, and land use changes that disrupt the natural flow of water and sediment across the landscape. Such alterations weaken the natural functioning of rivers and coasts, reduce habitat diversity, and limit the capacity of ecosystems to adapt and recover. While some modifications still play an important role, many no longer do, yet continue to degrade ecological health, weaken climate resilience, and fragment habitats. Tackling these pressures is essential to restoring natural processes and creating healthier, more resilient catchments and coasts.

In the previous Significant Water Management Issues consultation in 2020/21 (called Challenges and Choices), 4 key priorities to restore the natural function and resilience of our rivers, catchments, and coasts were identified:

- remove redundant structures that block flow and wildlife movement
- give rivers and coasts space to adjust and recover
- ensure new developments support nature recovery
- keep soil on the land to protect water quality and habitats

There has been notable progress since the previous consultation including continued investment, for example. through the Water Environment Investment Fund (WEIF) and Water Restoration Fund - towards local and collaborative projects to reduce physical modifications.

Nature-based solutions are being embedded into national policy and delivery frameworks, including Environmental Land Management, Biodiversity Net Gain, and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. On the ground, projects (like the Restore rivers wiki) are reconnecting rivers to floodplains, restoring sediment dynamics, and enabling coastal systems to adjust naturally. These interventions work with physical processes to reverse the impacts of historic modifications and deliver multiple benefits, from improved biodiversity and water quality to climate resilience and sustainable growth.

Despite this momentum, many interventions remain limited in scope or designed for single outcomes. Addressing physical modifications at scale requires a strategic shift; mainstreaming nature-led recovery, aligning funding and strengthening regulation, and embedding geomorphology principles into planning and decision-making. Recent developments, such as the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, and recommendations from the Independent Water Commission (Sir Jon Cunliffe) and Delivering economic growth and nature recovery" (Dan Corry) regulatory reviews, highlight opportunities to better integrate physical

restoration and nature-led recovery into how we manage the water environment at scale.

Delivering this vision will require coordinated action across sectors and across landscapes. It means supporting catchment partnerships, setting measurable targets and monitoring progress, and recognising the value of natural processes in delivering public goods and ecosystem services. Failure to act risks deepening ecological decline and missing opportunities for climate adaptation. With appropriate backing, addressing physical modifications is not just beneficial, but fundamental to a thriving society, resilient and recovering ecosystems, and sustainable development.

For further information on this challenge see the Physical modifications: challenges for the water environment document.

For further information on the pressures associated with this challenge see State of nature decline: challenges for the water environment document.

If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may like to answer the questions below:

Question 10: What duties, powers and responsibilities could present, or future water regulators have to effectively respond to, and deliver measures for, physical modification pressures across rivers, catchments and coasts?

Question 11: How might these duties, powers and responsibilities evolve to support delivery of measures to deliver water body environmental objectives and wider nature recovery, climate resilience and sustainable development?

Question 12: How should success in addressing physical modification pressures be defined and measured in environmental, social, and economic terms?

Challenge 6: Pollution from agriculture and rural sector

Agriculture shapes much of England's landscape and plays a critical role in the country's environmental and economic wellbeing, including food security, flood and drought resilience. However, the sector also exerts significant pressure on the water environment, contributing to pollution, abstraction stress and habitat degradation.

As the water industry improves its infrastructure, the relative impact of nutrient pollution from farming is expected to rise. With over 70% of England's land managed by farmers, the way land is cultivated - particularly the use of fertilisers, pesticides, and organic waste - has a profound effect on water quality, soil health, and biodiversity. Currently, around 41% of rivers and groundwater are polluted due to agricultural practices, highlighting the urgent need for more sustainable land management.

Despite these pressures, farming is also part of the solution. Good farm management, supported by regulatory advice led inspections, agri-environment schemes and natural flood management, can mean cleaner water, greater flood resilience and climate adaptation.

However, achieving this balance will require changes in how land is used, how livestock is managed, and how inputs are applied. It will also require adequate policies and funding to help farmers transition toward practices that protect the environment while continuing to produce food. The path to sustainable farming is complex, but it is essential for safeguarding the natural resources that underpin the rural environment and the farming industry itself.

For further information on this challenge, see the Agriculture and rural land management: challenges for the water environment document.

For further information on the pressures associated with this challenge the following Challenges for the water environment documents provide more detailed information around this issue:

- Pollution from water industry wastewater: challenges for the water environment
- Nitrates: challenges for the water environment
- Faecal contamination: challenges for the water environment
- Phosphorus: challenges for the water environment
- State of nature decline: challenges for the water environment
- Drinking water protected areas: challenges for the water environment

If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may like to answer the questions below:

Question 13: How effective do you think current government policies, such as agri-environment schemes (e.g. payments for environmental land management), or targeted habitat restoration, are in improving water quality?

Question 14: How effective do you think farming regulations are in dealing with agricultural pollution?

Question 15: What kind of advice and support do farmers and land managers need to take effective action to improve water quality?

Question 16: Who do you think is best placed to provide advice farmers and land managers?

Question 17: How can trust in advice to farmers and land managers be strengthened?

Question 18: Based on your experience, what types of evidence or monitoring would help build confidence in understanding agriculture's impact on water quality?

Question 19: How should regulation, financial support, and market incentives be balanced to help the farming sector reduce its contribution to water pollution?

Challenge 7: Pollution from towns, cities and transport

More than half of the world's population now lives in cities, and in England that figure is even higher, with 83 percent of people living in urban areas. Urbanisation and transport places pressure on the environment, and pollution from towns and cities. This pollution comes from many sources, including household waste, road runoff, drainage systems, transport, industry, and housing. Past industrial activity has also left a significant legacy of contaminated land, soils, and water.

Climate change is intensifying the issues faced by densely populated areas. Pollution from urban environments becomes particularly damaging during heavy rainfall after long dry periods. Pollutants accumulate on hard surfaces such as roads and in drains during dry weather. When heavy rain arrives, it washes these pollutants into rivers and streams, which can severely affect wildlife. This type of weather pattern is likely to become more common as the climate continues to change. Many people are also unaware that homes are connected to two separate drainage systems. One is the foul wastewater drain, which takes water from sinks, toilets, and washing machines. The other is the surface water system, which carries rainwater from roofs and pavements. Misconnected household plumbing, where sinks or appliances are wrongly linked to the surface water system, can send untreated waste directly into our rivers.

With good stewardship, strong governance, and better planning, we can improve both our urban environments and the natural world around them. These benefits can be realised by creating sustainable, well-designed housing and infrastructure, and by providing cleaner and more efficient transport options. Through better planning and informed choices, we can build towns and cities that support healthy communities and protect the environment for the future.

For further information on this challenge, see the Towns, cities and transport: challenges for the water environment document:

For further information on the pressures associated with this challenge see the Challenge 3: Chemicals in the water environment page in this consultation and the following documents providing more detailed information around this issue:

- Pollution from water industry wastewater: challenges for the water environment
- Nitrates: challenges for the water environment
- Faecal contamination: challenges for the water environment
- Phosphorus: challenges for the water environment
- Drinking water protected areas: challenges for the water environment

Question 20: What do you see as the main causes of pollution in urban areas?

Challenge 8: Pollution from water industry wastewater

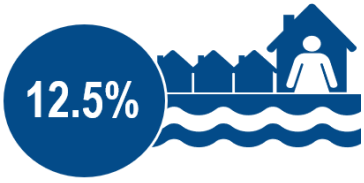
The water industry plays a vital role in making sure that wastewater from homes and businesses is safely treated and returned to the environment. This helps to protect our health and the health of our waters.

Wastewater pollution has in the past damaged rivers, streams, groundwater, coastal waters, and soils. Treated wastewater returned to the environment has become much cleaner over the last 30 years. However, the water industry's environmental performance has stagnated and, in certain cases, deteriorated in recent years.

Increased monitoring has identified that water industry activities are still one of the main reasons why our waters are not in a good enough state. The number of storm overflow spills, particularly dry day spills, are still unacceptable.

In 2024, the average number of spills per storm overflow was 31.8, and only 12.5% of overflows did not spill at all. Work is underway to address these problems, but more is needed. Water companies need to further improve their treatment systems and reduce incidents of untreated wastewater being discharged to rivers and coastal waters.

Number of spills per storm overflow in 2024



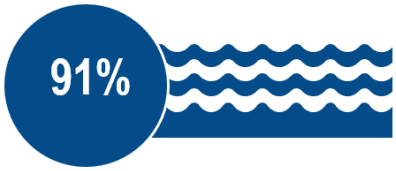
Number of overflows that did not spill at all in 2024

Regulation and enforcement have improved in recent years. The Water (Special Measures) Act will give regulators tougher powers, and more officers have been recruited.

We have exceeded our target of 4,000 water company inspections in 2024/25 and are on track to deliver 10,000 in 2025/26. Upgraded digital tools allow data to be rapidly turned into regulatory intelligence, leading to a major criminal investigation against all water companies.

More than 91% of bathing waters meet minimum standards, and bathing water quality information is now easily accessible online.

The number of storm overflows monitored across the network has now increased from 10% in 2015 to 100% at the end of 2023, with summary data published annually and a move to publish the data in near real time.



of bathing waters meet minimum standards

Number of water company inspections the EA is on track to delver in 2025/26

The recommendations of the Independent Water Commission will further influence the future of the water sector and how it is regulated. The final report recognises that greater coordination across water sector regulation is essential to meet the challenges faced in the water sector effectively. Government is considering several recommendations as a priority, including establishing an integrated water regulator and ensuring greater local involvement in water planning. We are working closely with government as they prepare their comprehensive response.

Water companies must also make sure that their services and assets can cope with the impacts of climate change and future growth. More extreme weather and growing populations are making it harder to protect and improve the environment. Improvements need to be designed in partnership with other sectors to promote an efficient circular economy, for example through recovery and reuse of nutrients and reducing use of harmful chemicals. This should avoid wasteful surpluses and losses without causing damage to water, land, soils, or air. Downstream impacts on sludge and bioresources need to be considered. Water companies are now developing statutory Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans that will provide the evidence base to plan for these future pressures on their systems.

Producers and users of substances that can harm the environment need to play their part by minimising how much enters the environment via wastewater. We can all help by using less water in our homes and by thinking more carefully about what we pour down the sink and flush down the toilet. Water companies must also play their part by rapidly improving their environmental performance to protect and enhance environmental water quality.

For further information on this challenge, see the Pollution from water industry wastewater: challenges for the water environment document.

For further information on the pressures associated with this challenge see the Challenge 3: Chemicals in the water environment page in this consultation and the following Challenges for the water environment documents:

- Nitrates: challenges for the water environment
- Faecal contamination: challenges for the water environment
- Phosphorus: challenges for the water environment
- State of nature decline: challenges for the water environment
- Drinking water protected areas: challenges for the water environment

Question 21: Which pollution issues linked to water industry wastewater should be prioritised and why?

Question 22: Which measures do you think should be prioritised in dealing with wastewater pollution?

Question 23: Is the balance right between taking short term solutions and considering longer, more nature friendly solutions?

Question 24: How can new data and technologies help to address pollution from water industry wastewater?

Pollution for abandoned mines - South West and Northumbria River Basin Districts

River basin district (RBD) specific data shows that pollution from abandoned mines is a significant challenge in the South West and Northumbria RBDs:

- Challenges in the South West River Basin District on the Catchment Data Explorer
- Challenges in the Northumbria River Basin District on the Catchment Data Explorer

Mining played a major part in our rich industrial history, but this also has led to thousands of abandoned mines left scattered across our landscape. Most of these mines closed well over 100 years ago but they still can pollute our rivers, harm fish, river insects and ecosystems, and potentially have an adverse impact on economic activity.

For further information on this challenge, see the Mine waters: challenges for the water environment document.

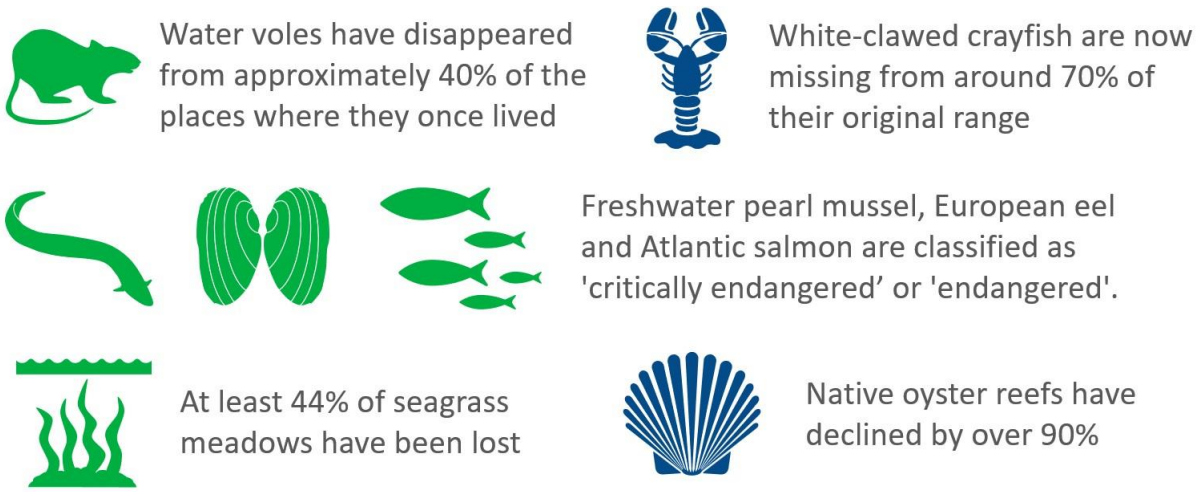
Question 25: What can be done to address pollution from abandoned mines in these river basin districts?

State of nature decline

Biodiversity, the variety of living things, is essential to our survival on this planet. It is the interaction between biodiversity and non-living natural resources that generates most of the benefits to society, including air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat and materials for shelter.

However, many of our water-dependent habitats such as coastal and freshwater wetlands, rivers, lakes and ponds have been lost, isolated, modified and polluted. Many of the species that depend on them are also in decline - threatened by pressures from our use of land and water, either directly, from the wider catchment, or more widely from climate change and the introduction and spread of invasive species.

Species are an integral part of naturally functioning ecosystems. However, nearly 1 in 6 species are at risk of extinction in Great Britain. According to The Most Comprehensive Report on the UK's current biodiversity, in England species abundance has declined on average by 32% since 1970. This decline includes familiar species in the water environment, for example:



Species decline further information:

- National Water Vole Database project
- Buglife: White Clawed crayfish species management sheet
- IUCN Red list: Freshwater pearl mussel
- IUCN Red list: European eel
- IUCN Red list: Atlantic salmon
- Frontiers in plant science: Historical Analysis Exposes Catastrophic Seagrass Loss for the United Kingdom
- Native oyster network

River basin management plans play a vital role in nature recovery by promoting a healthier and more resilient water environment for native wildlife to thrive. To address the nature emergency effectively we need to make the best use of the mechanisms and tools available to us to drive nature recovery from source to sea.

Nature-based solutions play a vital role in creating and restoring wildlife-rich habitats, restoring natural processes on a large scale. Physical modifications are among the most widespread and long-lasting pressures on the water environment. Nature-based solutions such as peat restoration and woodland creation also have significant benefits for the water environment. For example, peat restoration can improve water quality and protect rivers from low flows and reduce flood risks. Woodland creation can intercept nutrients and provide shade to keep rivers cool and protect vulnerable fish species. This can be particularly important for chalk streams and the distinctive array of plants and wildlife they support. These unique ecosystems are almost exclusively found in England.

While improvements have been made to the water environment, more targeted action is needed from source to sea. For example, estuarine and coastal waters are not only impacted by marine sources of pollution but also activities upstream in their catchments. The consequences are far-reaching, affecting wildlife, human health, and economic prosperity, with many coastal communities continuing to experience higher levels of deprivation compared to inland areas.

A lot has changed since river basin management plans were last updated in 2022. For the first time in this country we have legally binding targets for nature in England (The Environmental Targets (Biodiversity) (England) Regulations 2023) – reflecting the urgent need to take action to recover nature.

The Environment Act 2021 also sets targets to improve the water environment in England. We know that nature recovery, in addition to restoring our precious habitats and species, can reduce pollutant loads, stabilise soil, and improve natural filtration leading to tangible improvements in water quality.

To achieve nature recovery and meet these targets we need to:

- Restore our physically modified rivers (including headwaters, estuaries, floodplains and riparian habitat), lakes, wetlands, ponds and coasts to a more natural state (addressing water quality, morphology, hydrology and biology).
- Create new wildlife-rich habitat to support water-dependent species.
- Take action to reduce both current and future pressures on wildlife and its habitat by taking a ‘source to sea’ approach.
- Take proactive, targeted actions where appropriate to restore our most threatened native species.

- Practice biosecurity to help prevent the spread of invasive non-native species (INNS) and work with local partners to control those INNS we already have.

By taking these actions we can restore precious natural habitats and species, making them more resilient to long-term pressures such as climate change and secure the multitude of benefits to society that nature provides. Acting now is more cost-effective, whereas delaying action will only lead to greater environmental, economic and social damage and increased costs in the future.

Responding to the nature emergency and enabling nature recovery cannot happen in a vacuum. A healthy environment is vital for a thriving economy and helps support economic growth. As the Dasgupta review on the economics of biodiversity highlighted, our economies, livelihoods and well-being all depend on the health of nature. Delivering nature recovery must consider the needs of both people and wildlife and the effects of climate change on species and habitats.

The water environment and the species and habitats it supports are precious and provide a multitude of benefits for people and wildlife. If we act now to restore nature, we can protect and enhance these benefits for future generations, but we need your help to identify the best ways to do this and ensure that everyone plays a part.

The State of nature decline: challenges for the water environment document provides more information on this challenge.

For further information on the pressures associated with this challenge see the Challenge 4: Invasive non-native species and Challenge 5: Physical modifications sections of this consultation. The following Challenges for the water environment documents provide more detailed information around this issue:

- Peatland degradation: challenges for the water environment
- Estuaries and Coasts: challenges for the water environment

Nature-based solutions such as saltmarsh restoration, woodland creation, peatland recovery, and working with natural processes deliver multiple benefits for the water environment.

Question 26: What do you see as the biggest opportunities and barriers to scaling up and accelerating nature recovery through these approaches?

How could these challenges be overcome (are there good examples we can learn from)?

Question 27: What data and information do you need to target investment and action to deliver wildlife-rich water habitat and benefits for water-dependent species (locally and on a larger scale)?

Question 28: What actions are needed to enable the recovery of estuarine and coastal environments, ensuring they deliver long-term benefits for biodiversity and climate resilience, while supporting thriving coastal communities?

Local Partnerships

Significant improvements in the water environment have been delivered over the last few decades through regulation and enforcement. However, it is widely recognised that this alone is not enough to make the step change in the water environment that the public rightly expect. Many issues are complex and require integrated action, from multiple organisations. Collaboration in identifying, planning and delivering action can also bring opportunities to deliver additional and wider outcomes and benefits for local communities through working in an integrated way, for example, improving access to good quality blue and green space.

Local delivery partnerships have been identified in previous river basin planning consultations and, in the government's Independent Water Commission (IWC) (2025) recommendations as being valuable in bringing communities and partners together and to deliver actions, as shown in the infographic below.

The previous Significant Water Management Issues consultation in 2020/21 (called Challenges and Choices) asked how local delivery partnerships could become more inclusive and representative of all stakeholders within their catchments.

Responders cited that a lack of resource within partnerships was the primary restriction for expanding engagement. Groups identified as not widely involved were local government, farmers and landowners, business and industry, developers, local interest groups and recreational groups. Uncertainty borne from annual funding was also a dominant theme acting as a barrier to representativeness and inclusivity leading to a high turnover of staff and therefore experience.

In response, Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) partnerships have been working to improve inclusivity. It is recognised that a broader representation of the community improves understanding of the perspective across public, private and civil society. Leading to multiple benefits and improved resilience.

The 2023/24 CaBA Benefits and evaluation report states that around 70% of partnerships have carried out research to understand the demographics of the catchment they represent. This has led to them establishing ways of engaging with a more diverse audience. However, the report found that only around 20% of partnerships consider they are representative of the communities they serve.

Partnerships have reported progress engaging with farmers (7,742 farmers engaged – CaBA Benefits and evaluation report), schools and some local interest groups. This work to improve diversity of partners and engagement will continue and lead to actions that will bring wider benefits to the environment, society and the economy.

You can find out more about the Catchment Based Approach and your local catchment partnership on the CaBA website and more about the activities of the partnerships on the Catchment Partnership Pages on the Catchment Data Explorer.

The IWC report (2025) states that some stakeholders have identified strengthening catchment-based governance as a key requirement to more effectively delivery of priority outcomes in the water sector. The recommendations in the report include seeking to clarify the roles and capability of local delivery partnerships, including CaBA, nature recovery networks, local nature partnerships, local enterprise partnerships, coastal partnerships and more, potentially with a more professional and clearer remit. Defra has committed to moving to a catchment-based approach for managing water, following the Independent Water Commission report.

Question 29: How can local delivery partnerships be strengthened to better achieve priority outcomes in the water sector, while preserving their unique local relevance?

Question 30: What information, guidance, or tools do local partnerships need to drive action towards a healthier water environment with broad environmental, social, and economic benefits?

Supporting information

River basin districts

A river basin management plan is produced for each river basin district (RBD). As part of this Significant Water Management Issues consultation, you will be asked to identify which river basin district(s) your response applies to or if your response applies to the whole of England.

You can find out which river basin district that your response applies to on the Catchment Data Explorer.

We are responsible for the review and update of the river basin management plans for the six river basin districts that fall entirely within England: Anglian, Humber, North West, South East, South West, and Thames.

We also lead on the review and update of the plans for the Severn and Northumbria RBDs which lie partly in Wales and Scotland respectively.

River basin management plans for the other two cross-border river basin districts, the Solway Tweed and the Dee, are led by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Natural Resources Wales respectively. However, for information on how significant water management issues are managed in the English parts of those two river basin districts please refer to this consultation. For information on the significant water management issues in the Welsh part of the Severn RBD, see Challenges and choices – a consultation on Wales's significant water management issues.

Solway Tweed River Basin District (RBD)

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) leads on the review and update of the river basin management plan for the Solway Tweed River Basin District (RBD).

You will be able to find SEPA's significant water management issues consultation for Scotland, covering the Solway Tweed RBD, when it launches, on the SEPA consultation website. You can respond to that consultation with respect to the English part of the RBD. You can also respond with respect to how the significant water management issues are managed for the Solway Tweed RBD in England through this consultation.

You can find detailed information about English water bodies in the Solway Tweed RBD via the Catchment Data Explorer.

Dee River Basin District (RBD)

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) leads on the review and update of the river basin management plan for the Dee River Basin District.

The Challenges and choices – a consultation on Wales's significant water management issues, which covers the Dee RBD, is overseen by NRW and runs from 21 October 2025 to 21 April 2026. You can respond to that consultation with respect to the English part of the RBD. You can also respond with respect to how the significant water management issues are managed for the Dee RBD in England through this consultation. A Welsh Language version of the consultation is also available.

You can find detailed information about English water bodies in the Dee RBD on the Dee River Basin District page on the Catchment Data Explorer.

Habitats Sites protected areas

Habitats Sites protected areas (previously known as Natura 2000 protected areas) are designated for their international conservation importance. They represent the UK's most important wildlife sites and, as such, are given special consideration within river basin planning.

You can find out more about more about how the challenges described in this consultation impact these sites and how Habitats protected areas are included in river basin management plans in the State of nature decline: challenges for the water environment document.

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) have been undertaken on the 2009 and 2016 updates to the river basin management plans (RBMPs). The 2022 river basin management plans did not require an assessment. We, as the responsible authority, must make a screening determination under the SEA regulations for the 2027 update to the RBMPs. We are consulting on the SEA Scoping Reports, published on Gov.uk, as part of this consultation. You can respond to the questions in those reports below.

Question 31: Do you agree that we are focussed on the potential environmental effects?

Question 32: Is there any other information that we should be considering as part of the assessment?

Evidence

Sharing information

We have developed the Catchment Data Explorer to help you explore and understand the water environment in England. It supports and builds upon the data available in the river basin management plans. You can find catchments and water bodies of interest using a map or searching by name. You can also view summary information about catchments and follow links to other useful sites.

The Catchment Data Explorer contains an overview page for each river basin district and a summary of the significant issues affecting the water environment in each RBD.

You do not need to refer to the detailed information in the Catchment Data Explorer in order to respond to this consultation.

Detailed information about water bodies in the Welsh parts of the Dee and Severn RBDs can be found on Water Watch Wales.

Sectors and challenges preventing good water quality

The following table shows the significant (>10% water bodies impacted) issues preventing water bodies in England reaching good status (ecological status/potential, chemical status and groundwater status) and the sectors whose activities are causing those issues. The percentages are based on the total number of water bodies in England; not just those not achieving good status. The figures in the separate row at the bottom of the table '% of water bodies impacted by the activity of each sector', and those in the separate column on the right of the table '% of water bodies impacted by each issue' are not summations of the figures displayed in the main table. These percentages have been calculated by only counting any particular water body once per sector or per issue and so avoid including multiple entries as outlined above.

Most of the data used to produce the tables is taken from the October 2025 set of probable and confirmed reasons for not achieving good status (RNAGs) linked to 2019 classifications, with the exception of:

1. Changes to the natural flows and levels of water. This data is for those water bodies that do not have sustainable levels of abstractions. The sector contributions include suspected, probable and confirmed RNAGs, as well as Mitigation Measures Assessment elements with a Water Regulation (i. ii.) and drinking water supply reason from the artificial and heavily modified water body (AHMWB) dataset.

2. Physical modifications. The sector contributions include suspected, probable and confirmed RNAGs, as well as Mitigation Measures Assessment elements from the artificial and heavily modified water body (AHMWB) dataset.

3. Invasive non-native species. This uses Environment Agency monitoring data for any water body that has a specific invasive non-native species present, which we consider to be contributing to the water body not achieving good ecological status.

'No sector responsible' covers those situations where it is not possible to assign the failure to achieve good status to the activities of a specific sector. We have used this category mainly for invasive non-native species. Whilst the speed of their spread can be increased by poor practice, it is not possible to say whether their presence in a particular water body is 'natural' or due to someone's actions. Around 5% of water bodies have one or more RNAGs caused by a different sector to those listed in the table. These are mainly where the issue is physical modification.

The table shows those issues impacting greater than 10% of all water bodies. Other issues that impact less than 10% of all water bodies, but which may be locally significant, include pollution from abandoned mines (3.2%) and pollution from private domestic sewage treatment plants (5.6%).

Sectors and challenges preventing good water quality table:

Issue	Agriculture and rural land management	Industry	Mining and quarrying	Navigation	Urban and transport	Water Industry	Local and Central Government	Domestic General Public	Recreation	Waste treatment and disposal	No sector responsible	*Sector under investigation*	*Other*	% of water bodies impacted by each issue
Physical modifications	13.8%	2.0%	0.1%	2.0%	10.6%	5.7%	15.4%	0.2%	4.8%		0.3%	1.4%	4.3%	39.2%
Pollution from waste water	0.08%	0.5%			0.2%	32.7%	0.2%	0.6%		0.1%	0.02%	0.04%	0.1%	33.2%
Pollution from towns, cities and transport		3.2%	0.1%	0.08%	9.4%	1.4%	0.04%	2.5%		0.2%	0.06%	0.04%	0.1%	13.6%
Changes to the natural flow and levels of water	1.6%	0.5%		0.2%		9.4%	0.1%		0.04%			0.6%	0.3%	15%
Non-native invasive species											25.7%			25.7%
Pollution from rural areas	41%												0.02%	41%
% of water bodies impacted by each sector	46.8%	5.9%	3.4%	2.1%	17.8%	40.8%	15.6%	7.5%	5%	0.39%	25.9%	2.1%	5.1%	

Insignificant (<0.1%)
Very low (<1% and >0.1%)
Low (<10% and >1%)
Medium (<30% and >10%)
High (>30%)

You can see a larger version of the table on our consultation website.

Question 33: Let us know if there is an issue you consider significant which hasn't been covered in this consultation (tick box that applies or add under 'other')

☐Fine Sediment

☐Plastics

☐Microplastics

☐Pollution from abandoned mines

☐Pollution from private domestic treatment plants

☐Other:

About you

Please tell us some information about you before you submit your response. This will allow us to ensure your response gets to the right people and let us contact you when our response document is published.

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 to let you know that the consultation response document has been published, 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 consultation response document publication. You can additionally advise us you would like to informed about future river basin planning publications. We will keep you on a list for this purpose until the updated river basin management plans are published, planned for 2027.

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 RBMPconsultation@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.

Your information and how we'll use it

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 publish a summary of responses on our website in which we will publish the name of the organisation for those responses made on behalf of organisations.

For more information see our Personal Information Charter.

‘About you’ question 1: When we come to analyse the results of this consultation, it would help us to know if you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or group. Please select from the following options

☐Responding as an individual

☐Responding on behalf of an organisation (Please specify which organisation or group and include what type it is, e.g. business, environmental group, etc)

☐Other

Name of organisation or group:

‘About you’ question 2: What is your email address?

If you provide us with your email address, we will be able to follow up with any enquiries relating to your response. This could be seeking clarity or asking for evidence you have recommended we review. If you do not wish any further contact, leave the email address blank.

Email address:

We notify individuals and partners when we publish river basin planning consultations (as well as our consultation response documents) and updates to the plans. If you would like to be added to a list of those notified, please tick the box below. If you leave it unticked, we will assume you do not want further notification.

☐ Please add me to the notification email list

‘About you’ question 3: Please select which river basin district your response to this consultation applies to (you can select more than one or submit a national response by selecting 'England').

(Required)

☐Anglian

☐Humber

☐North West

☐Northumbria

☐Severn

☐South East

☐South West

☐Thames

☐Dee (English part)

☐Solway Tweed (English part)

☐England (all river basin districts)

You can identify what river basin district you are in by using the interactive map on the catchment data explorer (opens in new window).

In accordance 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 to be kept confidential, we may still be required to provide a summary of it.

‘About you’ question 4: Are you happy for us to publish or quote your response? We will not publish any personal information or parts of your response that will reveal your identity.

☐Yes

☐No

‘About you’ question 5: Finally, it would really help us if you let us know where you found out about this consultation.

☐Advert in newspaper

☐Email from the Environment Agency

☐Government website

☐Internet search

☐Through engagement with Environment Agency

☐Other (please specify below)

Submit consultation

Once you have completed this form, please send it via e-mail to RBMPconsultation@environment-agency.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can post it to:

Dave Trewolla,

RBMP Programme Manager,

Environment Agency,

Sir John Moore House,

Victoria Square,

Bodmin,

PL311EB.

The closing date for receipt of your comments is 20 May 2026.

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

incident hotline

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Environment first

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