



Consultation on the 'Water resources planning guideline'

October 2025

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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What we are consulting on

The water resources planning guideline sets out the guidance that Government and regulators expect water companies to follow when writing their statutory water resources management plans. We revise the water resources planning guideline every 5 years, prior to water companies drafting their water resources management plans. We plan to publish a final version of this guideline in Spring 2026.

Water resources management plans are statutory plans which set out how water companies will provide a secure supply of water, while protecting the environment, to their customers and businesses over at least the next 25 years. This will include proposals such as metering, reducing leakage and building new schemes such as reservoirs. Water companies produce these plans every 5 years. The next plans are due for public consultation in 2028 and final versions published over the winter of 2028/29.

Scope of comments

We will consider comments that are related to:

- the water resources planning guideline
- Environmental Destination for Water Resources Planning Guidance

The presentation of these documents may change when they are published in their final form on GOV.UK. This consultation invites comments regarding their content, rather than their format.

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 run for 8 weeks from **13 October 2025** until **5 December 2025**.

How to respond

The consultation will close at midnight on 5 December 2025. We will use your information to help shape the water resources planning guideline.

A copy of this consultation will be available on [Citizen Space](#), which is the Environment Agency's consultation website.

Respond online

Please submit your response using the [Citizen Space website](#), as it helps us to:

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

Respond by email

If you prefer, you can submit your response by email using the Response form, which you will find under the "Related" section of the consultation on Citizen Space. Please email your completed Response form with the subject header of "Water resources planning guideline" to water-company-plan@environment-agency.gov.uk.

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

Consultation principles

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

If you believe the consultation has not been run in accordance with the principles, please email consultation.enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Otherwise, for all other queries relating to this consultation please email water-company-plan@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Data protection

How we will use your information

The Environment Agency may make responses publicly available after the consultation closes, unless you have specifically requested that we keep your response confidential. This includes comments received online and by email.

We will not publish names of individuals or personal data. But we will publish the name of the organisation for those responses made on behalf of organisations.

We will not respond individually to responses. 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 consultation 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 water-company-plan@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.

About you

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 choose one of the following:

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

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

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

We welcome your views on our proposals. If you would like to receive emails acknowledging your response and/or telling you when we have published the consultation response document, please select from:

- yes, I would like to receive an email acknowledging my response
- yes, I would like to receive an email to let me know the consultation response document is published

If you have selected any of the above, please tell us your email address:

Can we publish your response? We will not publish any personal information or personal identifiable 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.

Supplementary guidance

There are a number of technical guidance notes that support the water resources planning guideline. Our provisional list of these is as follows:

Updates to previous supplementary guidance notes

- Adaptive planning
- Outage
- Resource zone integrity
- 1 in 500
- Environment and society in decision-making
- Preventing deterioration
- Leakage
- Climate change
- Stochastics
- Guidance for NAVs

New supplementary guidance notes

- Material change

If you would like to be part of an informal consultation on these supplementary guidance notes, or receive the final version, please contact Water-company-plan@environment-agency.gov.uk and we will share these as they are available.

Consultation questions

Question 1: Do you have any concerns regarding the guideline that you would like to highlight?

Question 2: Do you have any suggested improvements to the guideline that you would like to make?

If you do, please provide your suggested edits.

Question 3: Do you have any other comments about the guideline that you would like to make?

Question 4: Do you believe that the guideline allows water companies to produce plans with secure and resilient water supplies which protect the environment?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

If no, how do you think the guidance should be improved? Please provide specific comments to support your response

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 water resources planning guideline. We plan to publish the final guideline in Spring 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

0800 807060 (24 hours)

floodline

0345 988 1188 (24 hours)

Find out about call charges (<https://www.gov.uk/call-charges>)

Environment first

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