

AffinityWater

Drought Management Plan 2023

Annual Update Addendum 2024



Security Notice

This document has been written in compliance with our security policy so that no redaction is required for publication.

Contents

Introduction.....	4
Section 4 – Actions in normal/non-drought.....	4
Section 4.1 Actions in normal/non-drought	4
Section 4.2.1 Communications and reducing demand	4
Section 4.2.4 Communicating water resources and water use	5
Section 4.2.5 Leakage reduction	5
Section 5 – Identifying and monitoring droughts	5
5.2 Monitoring our Water Resources.....	5
Section 7 – Drought Trigger 1	6
Section 7.2 Our Drought Management Group.....	6
Section 7.3.1 - Agile Communications Campaign – Save Our Streams.....	6
Section 7.3.4 Leakage reduction	6
Section 8 – Drought Trigger 2	6
8.2.3 Temporary Use Bans.....	6
8.2.3.7 Adjustment to charges (Temporary Use Bans)	7
Section 9 – Drought trigger 3.....	7
Section 9.4.1 – Drought permits	8
Section 12 – Our approach to communications and engagement.....	8
Section 12.1.3 – Communicating more frequently	8
Section 12.1.9 – Regional collaboration	8

List of figures

Figure 1: Example water resource graphic for our website	5
Figure 2 Primary lines of communication between a water company / NAV and its HH and NHH customers (box), and also with other groups (circles)	9

List of tables

Table 1: Drought management actions carried out in drought trigger 3.....	7
---	---

Introduction

This document provides an update and sets out the changes we have made to our Drought Management Plan (DMP) 2023. Changes set out here do not constitute any material changes to our Plan, but reflect our improved knowledge and understanding of drought management following the drought event experienced in 2022 and minor updates since the publication of the Plan. This document should be read in conjunction with our DMP 2023¹. Please note that minor updates have also been made to the Drought Plan Appendices, and these changes have been made directly in the Appendix document.

Section 4 – Actions in normal/non-drought conditions

Section 4.1 Actions in normal/non-drought conditions

Operational Resilience Monitoring Group – Head of External Communications role, replaced with Head of Marketing and Communications.

Section 4.2.1 Communications and reducing demand

We have a dedicated campaign, Save Our Streams, to focus efforts on reducing demand among our customers. The Save our Streams campaign forms the key element of our Per Capita Consumption (PCC) strategy.

Home Water Efficiency Checks (now known as My Water Footprint Home Visits)

Now when customers access [affinitywater.co.uk/saveourstreams](https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/saveourstreams), they are directed to complete the My Water Footprint quiz, that helps them to find out how much water they are using and how much they could save.

- After taking a 3-minute questionnaire, a dashboard displays an estimated breakdown of where the customer's water, energy and money are going, and they are directed to order water-saving devices relevant for their home.
- Customers are also provided with extra water-saving tips to help them reduce their water and energy bills.

Please see section 12.1.5 in the main Drought Plan document for more information on our award-winning Save Our Streams initiative.

¹ <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/corporate/plans/drought-management>

Section 4.2.4 Communicating water resources and water use

We provide a monthly summary of our water resources on our website², which details our position on a scale, how many months out of the last year have been wetter than average, and how much rain we had in that month (see Figure 1 below). This page will also explain our position on Temporary Use Bans, particularly if we have experienced a dry period and our customers are wondering if a ban is in place, or if other companies in the region have implemented restrictions.



Figure 1: Example water resource graphic for our website

We also provide more information on our water resources including groundwater levels, long term average trends, the previous year benchmark and drought triggers (see Figure 8 in our main Drought Plan document).

Section 4.2.5 Leakage reduction

We beat our leakage target and reduced leakage by 18.3% in AMP7 by the end of Year 4 (2023/24), against a target of 17%. We are also confident we will meet our commitment to reduce leakage by 20% by 2025.

Section 5 – Identifying and monitoring droughts

5.2 Monitoring our Water Resources

The majority of the environmental monitoring data we collect which is set out in this section is also available on our website via our data portal³.

² <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/our-water-resources>

³ <https://environmentdata.affinitywater.co.uk/AQWebPortal>

Section 7 – Drought Trigger 1

Section 7.2 Our Drought Management Group

When minuting actions and decisions arising from our Drought Management Group (DMG) and sub-group meetings, we will record actions with their source/origin details with interested parties, and with information about why an action has been set. These will be recorded in the central DMG action log to ensure actions can be traced and tracked. This will be important both during the drought event (to ensure we take the actions we need to safeguard public water supplies and the environment) and once the drought has ended, as we will conduct a review of the drought event and how we managed it. This will be particularly important in cases where we may decide to take actions which vary slightly from those set out in our drought plan, usually in terms of timing in relation to reaching our drought triggers.

Understanding why we made the decisions and took the actions that we did will form an important part of the evidence base for reviewing how the drought was managed and will be reported through the lessons learned report compiled after a drought event has ended. When carrying out updates to our drought plan or developing a new drought plan, we will take account of lessons learned where necessary to improve our drought management practices.

Section 7.3.1 - Agile Communications Campaign – Save Our Streams

Our Save Our Streams campaign is outlined in Section 4.2 and has replaced 'Save 10 a Day'. This extensive communications campaign has evolved since its inception in 2020. More information can be found in our main Drought Plan and on our website⁴.

Section 7.3.4 Leakage reduction

We would also scale up our Home Leaks campaign in order to support customers to find and fix leaks in their own home that could be wasting water. For more information, please see affinitywater.co.uk/homeleaks.

Section 8 – Drought Trigger 2

8.2.3 Temporary Use Bans

Note that we now refer to the updated Managing through Drought Code of Practice, which was developed in 2023 following the 2022 drought event.

⁴ <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/saveourstreams>

8.2.3.7 Adjustment to charges (Temporary Use Bans)

For the majority of our customers, we do not make an additional charge for water used for any of the restricted uses of a Temporary Use Ban (TUB), so in general no reduction in charges would apply in the event of a TUB. In instances where our customers are unmetered and charged specifically for activities covered by TUB restrictions, we will make arrangements for the reasonable adjustment in charges for the duration of the TUB implementation, including arrangements for repayment or credit where charges have been paid in advance. This includes charges relating to general hosepipe and sprinkler use, and for using hosepipes to fill swimming pools or hot tubs. Note these reductions in charges would only relate to customers whose bills are based on an unmeasured supply.

We would also consider an adjustment in charges for our hydrant licensing payments, in the event that the TUB has an impact on the rights granted through those licences. We would review this on a case by case basis.

Section 9 – Drought trigger 3

Table 1: Drought management actions carried out in drought trigger 3

CATEGORY	ACTION DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT OF ACTION/WHY IT IS APPROPRIATE	IMPLEMENTATION TIMESCALES	PERMISSIONS OR CONSTRAINTS	RISKS	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS
Actions to reduce demand	Drought orders restricting non-essential use (NEUBs)	Restricting certain uses of hosepipes for domestic and non-household use – expected demand saving of approximately 5% ⁵	Approximately 5 weeks	DMG approval. Approval from Secretary of State	Potential confusion for customers if neighbouring companies do not implement NEUBs. Potential impacts on businesses which rely on hosepipe use for non-essential activities	Reductions in demand will help to leave more water in the environment

Following review of the Non-essential Use Ban (NEUB) process during the 2022 drought event, it was considered that the time frame associated with implementation of a NEUB would need to be extended to approximately five weeks. This includes an allowance for four weeks which is the expected amount of time which would be required to book slots in local newspapers to advertise the planned implementation of the NEUB.

⁵ This represents a combined saving with TUBs and NEUBs in place

Section 9.4.1 – Drought permits

Note that a drought permit application would usually take 12 days for determination following submission to the Environment Agency. During the 2022 drought a number of water companies applied to the Environment Agency for drought permits, and on average it took 40 days to determine applications. Some permits took longer to determine than planned due to the poor quality of the applications received from water companies. We have worked to ensure that our drought permits are 'application ready' prior to entering a drought event, and this will help to ensure that our drought permit applications are processed in a timely manner should the need for them arise.

Section 12 – Our approach to communications and engagement

Section 12.1.3 – Communicating more frequently

During a drought situation, the homepage of our website will feature our water resource status, which links through to more detailed information.

We currently send a monthly water resource update to our stakeholders.

Section 12.1.9 – Regional collaboration

Following the 2022 drought event, the UK Water Industry carried out an exercise to review and update the Code of Practice, which provides guidance to water companies on the effective implementation of water use restrictions to help manage demand during times of drought. The Code of Practice sets out expectations for coordination between water companies and regional groups prior to and during droughts. By working together this ensures a more consistent and joined up approach to managing droughts in the UK.

The updated Code of Practice explained that, as highlighted in 2012, for droughts covering more than one water company area, there were numerous benefits to having a single Drought Liaison Coordinator acting as an industry spokesperson; the absence of such a Coordinator in the 2022 drought experience confirmed this is still the case. Water UK will therefore aim to provide a coordinator who will represent the interests of the industry as a whole, with a suggested trigger for appointment to be early within the drought situation or when the EA declares drought, or when operational impacts are likely. Figure 21 in our main Drought Plan document sets out the indicative role of the Drought Liaison Coordinator during a drought event.

Regional groups may also wish to play a role in coordinating the drought messaging across their region, particularly where TUB restrictions are implemented by more than one company. If regional groups do wish to coordinate communications for their region, they should do so in line with the member water companies and National Drought Group (NDG) messaging.

Figure 2 shows the different lines of communication during a period of drought, between water companies and their household and non-household customers, retailers, regional groups, the NDG (and subgroups) and the Water UK Coordinator.

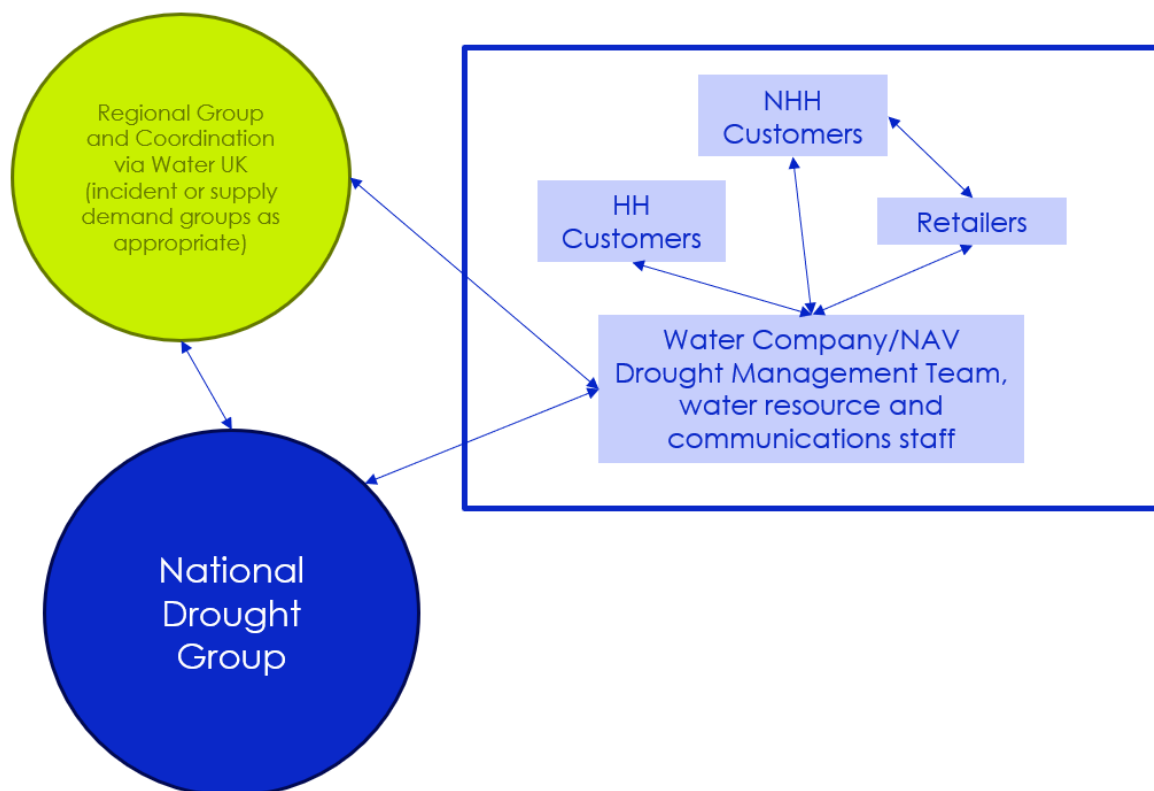


Figure 2 Primary lines of communication between a water company / NAV and its HH and NHH customers (box), and also with other groups (circles)⁶

Section 12.2.1 – Monitoring demand during a drought

We estimate that temporary use bans (TUBs) will reduce average demand by approximately 3%, and implementing non-essential use bans (NEUBs) will result in a 5% reduction in demand (combined with TUBs). These values are aligned with those used in our WRMP.

⁶ UKWIR – Managing through Drought: Code of Practice and Guidance for Water Companies on Water Use Restrictions – 2023 (Incorporating lessons from the 2022 drought)

