


# Draft Drought Plan Summary 2018

Consultation on how we'll secure  
your water supplies in droughts



**Have your say**  
January 8 to March 2, 2018

# WHAT IS A DROUGHT?

“A drought happens when there has been less rain than usual and there is a shortage of water for people, the environment, agriculture and industry.”

## WHAT IS A DROUGHT PLAN?

All water companies prepare drought plans to show how they will continue to make sure essential tap water is provided, even when sources are running low.

This plan shows the actions we will take in droughts to secure water for our customers in Hampshire and West Sussex.

It shows the restrictions we could introduce to help save water, when we could take more water from the environment and the extra work we would do to tackle leaks and involve you in water efficiency.

### WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This document is a summary of our draft Drought Plan for 2018–23 and we are sharing it with you to gather your views. We are carrying out a consultation between January 8 and March 2, 2018 and we’d really like you to have your say.

We’ll share your feedback with the government and, after we’ve updated our plan to reflect your views, we’ll publish a final version in April 2018.

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**\*Find out more and have your say at [portsmouthwater.co.uk/droughtplan](https://portsmouthwater.co.uk/droughtplan)**

# Welcome to our drought plan



Welcome to this document, which sets out the actions we would take in a drought to make sure you always have fresh, healthy drinking water at your taps.

As a whole, the South East is the driest region in the UK and has experienced several droughts in the past 50 years. Here at Portsmouth Water, we are very fortunate to source your supplies from groundwater and springs which are resilient to drought, and we’ve not needed to introduce restrictions since 1976. However, climate change is likely to bring longer, hotter summers, so it’s important we plan for the future and are fully prepared.

One of our future pledges to you in the coming years, is that we will provide a Safe, Secure and Reliable supply of drinking water – so this plan is a vital part of making sure we always do that – 24 hours a day, seven days a week – whatever the weather.

This plan is about your water service and we’re keen to hear your views, so thank you for taking the time to read this and we look forward to hearing from you.

*N Smith*  
Neville Smith,  
Managing Director  
Portsmouth Water

### Here’s a quick summary of this plan:

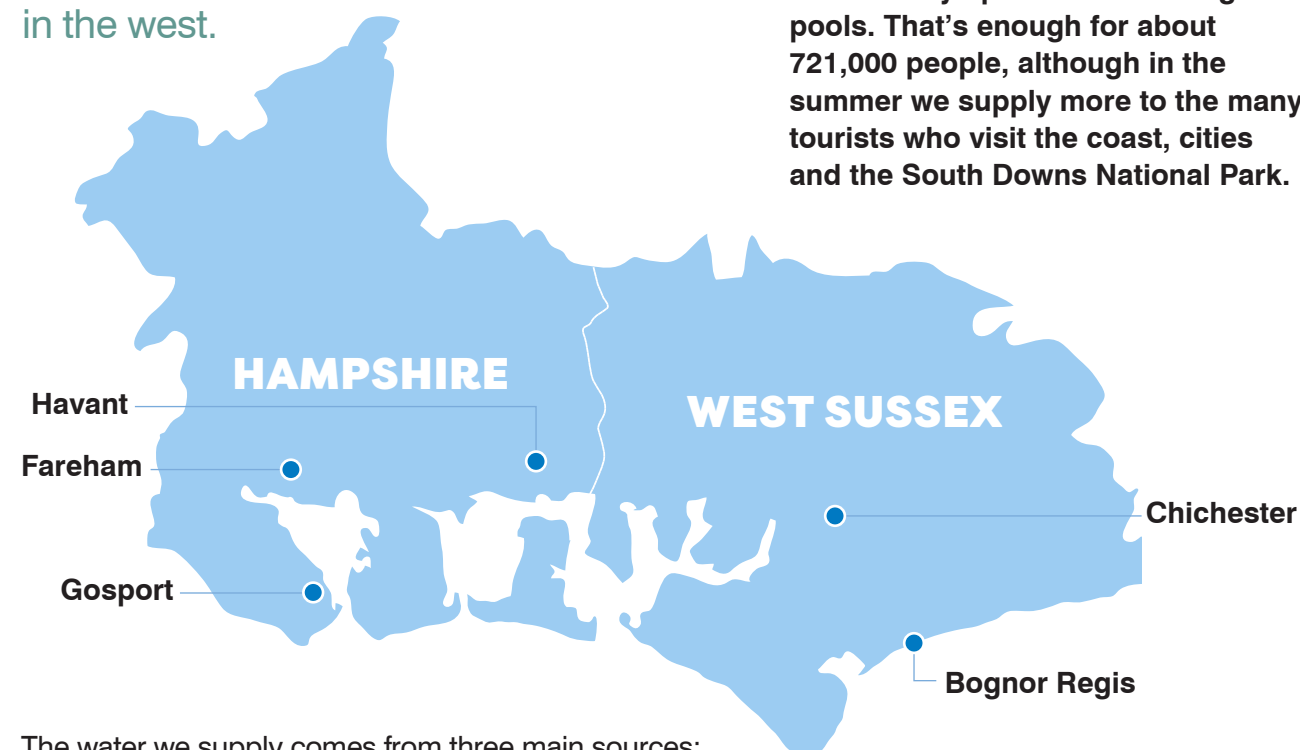
- We have resilient water sources and we haven’t needed water restrictions since 1976
- We’re planning for more extreme droughts than we’ve known in the past – so we’re ready for climate change
- Our first step will always be to find and fix more leaks and help you to save water
- Water restrictions would only limit activities such as watering gardens and washing cars
- We’ll protect businesses, the economy and jobs for as long as possible
- As a last step, we would apply to take more water from the environment
- We’ve reduced the likelihood of emergency restrictions such as rota cuts or standpipes
- These actions could affect you in a drought – this is your chance to have your say.

# Your water supplies

We supply fresh, safe drinking water to 318,000 homes and business in West Sussex and Hampshire, in an area which stretches from the River Arun in the east to the River Meon in the west.

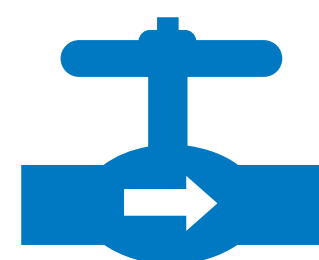


On an average day, we supply about 170 million litres of water – enough to fill 68 Olympic size swimming pools. That's enough for about 721,000 people, although in the summer we supply more to the many tourists who visit the coast, cities and the South Downs National Park.



The water we supply comes from three main sources:

<b>60% Groundwater</b> Most of your water comes from underground aquifers in the South Downs National Park, where water is stored in the gaps between rocks. We pump this to the surface from boreholes and wells – it's a very clean supply of water.	<b>31% Springs</b> About a third of your water comes from the Havant and Bedhampton springs, which have been supplying the area since 1860. We capture this water where it 'springs' to the surface, just before it flows out to sea.	<b>9% River</b> The rest of the water we supply is taken from the River Itchen, in Hampshire, which is fed by groundwater sources. This water requires more treatment to meet our high standards.
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We share up to 15 million litres of this water with Southern Water each day to supply our neighbours in West Sussex and later this year we'll share up to 15 million litres with our neighbours in Hampshire.



Your wastewater services are generally provided by Southern Water.



The average amount of water you use each day is 139 litres. For those of you on a water meter it's 114 litres and for those not on a meter it's 148 litres.



Nearly a third of you pay bills based on the amount of water you use (on a water meter).



You pay the lowest water bill in England and Wales – an average of £100 each year.



Our leakage rate is 35 million litres each day – we plan to reduce this by 15% by 2025.

## Different types of drought

A drought is caused by a shortage of rain over at least two years.

It's the rain during winter which is the most important to fill water sources, as most of the rain which falls during summer either evaporates or is drawn off by plants, trees and crops.

When it doesn't rain as much as usual water sources can start to run low, so it's important we have plans in place to tackle this.

Some start with a single, very hot dry summer, when demand for water becomes very high. Others build up slowly over a few years and can have a damaging effect on rivers and groundwater.

It's droughts which last two years or more, combined with hot summers, which are the biggest challenge for us. This is when we'll most likely need to take the actions set out in this plan – particularly between May and August when the demand for water is highest.

These are the types of droughts we're planning for – three of which are more serious than ones we've experienced in the past:

### TYPES OF DROUGHT

No two droughts are ever the same, so we've prepared for a range of different ones in this plan.



#### DROUGHT A

This is based on a two-year drought we experienced in the 1970s, where we saw some recovery in the winter.



#### DROUGHT B

This is a two-year drought – a dry autumn, winter, summer and autumn.



#### DROUGHT C

This is a two-year drought – with no significant rain until the spring of the second year.



#### DROUGHT D

This a three-year drought.



# Your views on droughts

When a drought happens, we'll need to work together to make sure you have reliable water supplies, so it's important you support the actions we'll take.

We've already held conversations with some of you and your community leaders about droughts and how we plan to tackle them.

This includes the water industry regulators who look after the environment, the Environment Agency and Natural England, the economic regulator Ofwat and the customer champion, the Consumer Council for Water.

We've also asked for your views about droughts and water restrictions in surveys and through a customer panel who have met regularly in 2017.

So far, you've said:

You don't want to pay more to reduce the likelihood of restrictions

The current risk of water restrictions (hosepipe bans) is okay (currently once in every 20–40 years on average)

Restrictions are acceptable in a serious drought

Many of you think it's never okay to limit water to standpipes in the street or have rota cuts where water is only available for a few hours a day

In an emergency you would prefer rota cuts to standpipes

You think we have introduced restrictions more frequently than we have – the last time was in 1976. This is probably because there have been several droughts in the South East since then, which have affected our neighbours in Sussex and Hampshire where water is scarcer.

Now, we're keen to hear more of your views, so please read on and share your feedback

# Our plans to tackle droughts

So, how do we know when there is a drought and how do we tackle it?

To monitor for droughts, we regularly measure the amount of rain which falls and the water levels in our groundwater and river sources.

When these fall below certain levels we trigger a phase of drought actions – some to reduce demand for water and some to secure more water to supply.

These actions start in **Impending Drought** and progress to **Drought** and then **Severe Drought**.

## PHASE ONE – IMPENDING DROUGHT

At this stage we would:

- Let you know that a drought is starting
- Engage you in using water more efficiently
- Step up our work to find and fix leaks.

## PHASE TWO – DROUGHT

It's at this stage we would:

- Introduce temporary use bans (formerly known as hosepipe bans) to restrict water use in homes and gardens

*The likelihood of us needing to introduce temporary use bans is one in 20–40 years on average (2.5% – 5% each year).*

- Prepare for a drought permit to take more water from groundwater in West Sussex
- Prepare for a drought order to extend restrictions to non-essential use and businesses
- Carry on our work from Phase One.

## PHASE THREE – SEVERE DROUGHT

If a drought continues for a longer time, we would:

- Introduce the non-essential use ban to widen the restrictions and include businesses
- Use our drought permit to take more water from groundwater in West Sussex

*The likelihood of us needing to introduce a non-essential use ban and use the drought permit is one in 80–125 years on average (0.8% to 1.25% each year).*

- Carry on our work from Phases One and Two
- Prepare for an emergency drought.

We have not needed to introduce water restrictions in West Sussex and Hampshire since 1976.

If the same conditions happened again, we would be better able to deal with them because

since the 1970s we've improved our water sources, extended our network to move water around and reduced leaks and the amount of water you use each day.



# When a drought starts

## PHASE ONE – IMPENDING DROUGHT

When we know a drought is on the way the first step is to let you know.



We already share regular updates on the levels of our water in the 'Water Supply News' section on our website and when a drought starts we'll post all the information you need there – at [portsmouthwater.co.uk/drought](https://portsmouthwater.co.uk/drought)

We'll make announcements through newspapers, radio and television, community channels and social media and offer advice and products to help you use water efficiently. At the same time, we'll step up our own work to find and fix leaks.

We'll also set up a dedicated Drought

Management Team to make sure every drought action is taken in good time to protect your water supplies.

As a drought is likely to affect other areas of the South East, we'll work with our neighbouring water companies, the Environment Agency and the body which represents all water companies, Water UK, to co-ordinate our activities.

It's also important we talk to local authorities, community and environment organisations and trade bodies to raise awareness of the drought and our actions.

# Water restrictions and how they affect you

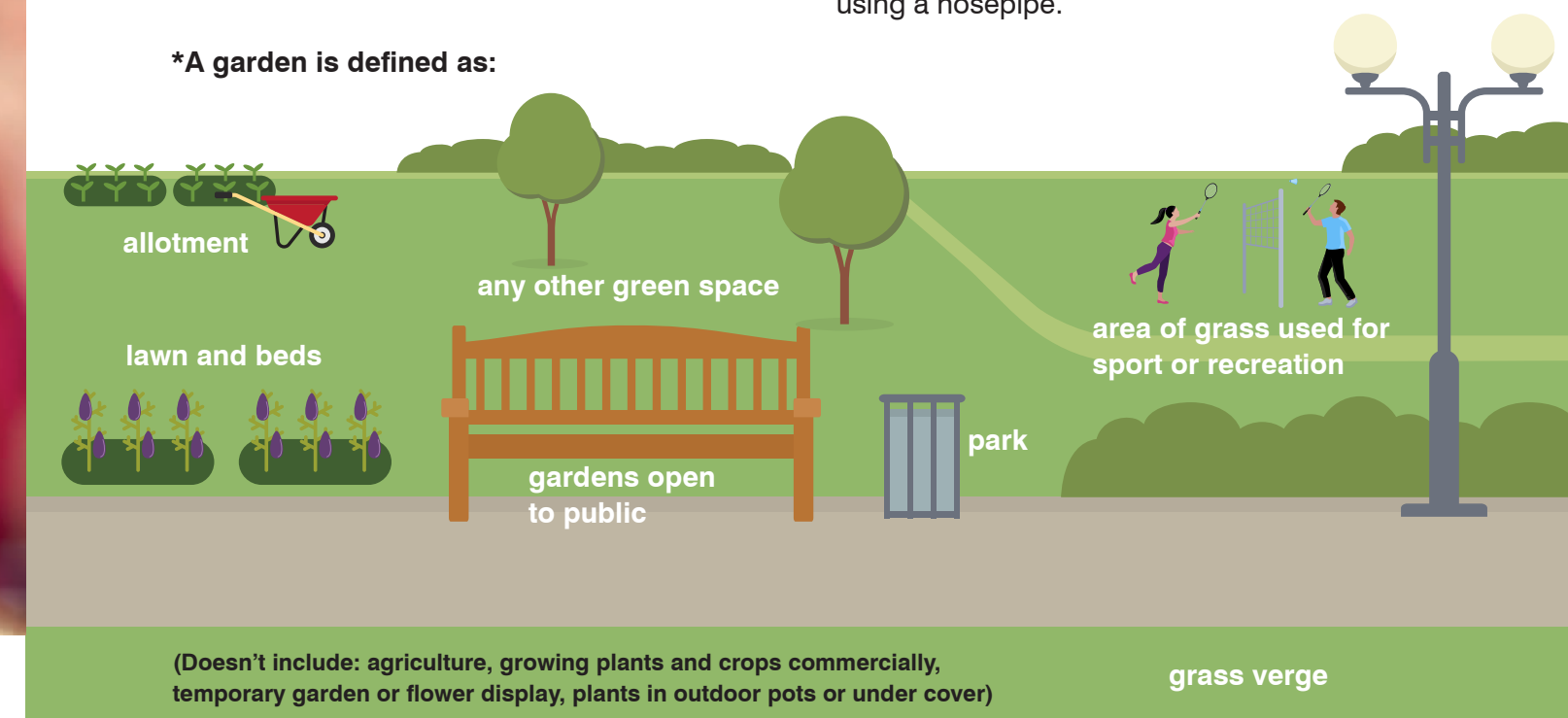
If dry weather continues and we move into a drought, we can introduce water restrictions to make sure we still have enough supplies for the essentials of drinking, cooking and washing.

These restrictions are called temporary use bans (TUBs) and can be introduced quickly – seven days after an advert has been placed in the local newspaper.

They were introduced under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and include all the activities from the previous hosepipe and sprinkler bans. These are only likely to be needed once in every 20–40 years (2.5% to 5% chance each year) and they cover:

- Watering a garden\* using a hosepipe
- Cleaning a private motor-vehicle using a hosepipe
- Watering plants on domestic or other non-commercial premises using a hosepipe
- Cleaning a private leisure boat using a hosepipe
- Filling or maintaining a domestic swimming or paddling pool
- Drawing water, using a hosepipe, for domestic recreational use
- Filling or maintaining a domestic pond using a hosepipe
- Filling or maintaining an ornamental fountain
- Cleaning walls, or windows, of domestic premises using a hosepipe
- Cleaning paths or patios using a hosepipe
- Cleaning other artificial outdoor surfaces using a hosepipe.

\*A garden is defined as:





If we need to introduce restrictions we'll list them on our website, share information on any exemptions, answer your frequently asked questions and let you know how to get in touch.

As restrictions have the potential to impact on your daily activities, work and communities, we'll work with other organisations to involve them in our plans. These will include local authorities, the fire service, health bodies, schools, trade bodies, agricultural and horticultural organisations and groups representing our elderly customers and customers who need extra support.



## NEXT STEP OF RESTRICTIONS



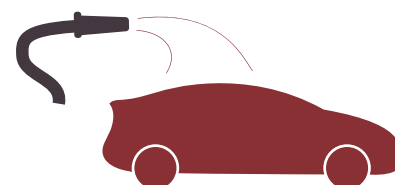
If a drought becomes much more serious – a Severe Drought – we may need to extend restrictions under a drought order to non-essential use. As these restrictions are more likely to have an impact on businesses and jobs then we introduce them after temporary use bans if possible.

These are only likely to be needed once in every 80–125 years on average (0.8% to 1.25% chance each year) and include:

- Watering outdoor plants on commercial premises using a hosepipe (doesn't include plants for sale)



- Filling or maintaining a non-domestic swimming or paddling pool (doesn't include public swimming pools or those for medical and veterinary use)
- Filling or maintaining a pond
- Operating a mechanical vehicle washer (hand washing is allowed)



- Cleaning any vehicle, boat, aircraft or railway rolling stock using a hosepipe (hand washing is allowed)



- Cleaning non-domestic premises using a hosepipe
- Cleaning a window of a non-domestic building using a hosepipe
- Cleaning industrial plant using a hosepipe
- Suppressing dust using a hosepipe
- Operating cisterns in an unoccupied building.

# Protecting livelihoods and customers who need extra support

In a drought, it's important we work together to make the most of the scarce water available.

However, we recognise that restrictions could cause particular hardship for some of you, so, along with the rest of the water companies in the UK, we have agreed some 'exceptions'.

These include:

- Our customers with a blue badge
- Elderly and disabled customers on our Special Needs Register (or who apply to the register)
- Trades who use a micro irrigation system (with a pressure-reducing valve and a timer) for watering gardens (not lawns)
- The use of drip irrigation systems (not in Phase 3 Severe Droughts)
- Companies which use hosepipes as part of their window cleaning business (not in Phase 3 Severe Droughts).

If you're on our Special Needs Register, we'll write to let you know that you are exempted from the restrictions.

We will also make concessions on the grounds of health and safety, but when possible we would encourage everyone to use recycled water or close the facilities.





A drought ends when enough rain falls to restore water levels in the groundwater, springs and rivers.

## What we'd do to find more water

In a drought, our first aim is to make the most of the water available by reducing leaks, helping you to save water and introducing restrictions.

However, we may also need to take action to provide more water until there is enough rain to refill our sources. We can do this by applying to the Environment Agency for a drought permit.

We have considered one drought permit in this plan, which is to take more water from a groundwater source in West Sussex.

We currently share water with Southern Water to supply our neighbours in West Sussex, as their region is seriously water stressed, and we may need this drought permit to continue their supply in a drought.

### LOOKING AFTER THE ENVIRONMENT

If we needed to apply for the drought permit, we would work with Southern Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England to monitor the effect on the natural environment and wildlife. We'd also carry out work to improve the environment and reduce any impact.

We would only expect to have to use this drought permit once in every 80–125 years on average (0.8% to 1.25% chance each year), in a Severe Drought. It was chosen as the option least likely to harm our environment.

## Emergency drought actions

It's very unlikely, but if we experience a drought which is longer and more severe than any we have planned for we may need to apply for an Emergency Drought Order.

This can only be granted by the government and would allow us to limit water to a few hours each day or supply water from standpipes in the street. We would still make water available for fire-fighting and prioritise supplies for hospitals and our vulnerable customers.

We have an Emergency Plan for this but the likelihood of it happening is less than once in every 200 years on average (0.5% chance each year).

### WHEN A DROUGHT BREAKS

A drought ends when enough rain falls to restore water levels in the groundwater, springs and rivers.

This can take a few months and it's important to leave restrictions in place and continue using water efficiently until we are confident we can supply all your needs without harming the environment, which will also be recovering.

At the end of a drought we'll review all our actions and ask for your feedback to make sure we learn how we could do things better.



# Have your say on our drought plan

Thank you for taking time to read our plans on how we'll tackle droughts in West Sussex and Hampshire.

We'd really love to hear your thoughts and we are holding a consultation between January 8 and March 2, 2018.

All your responses will be shared with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and will be considered by us when we publish our final Drought Plan in April 2018.

There are lots of ways you can have your say:



## ONLINE

Take a look at the questions on the next page and fill in our online survey at [portsmouthwater.co.uk/droughtplan](http://portsmouthwater.co.uk/droughtplan)



## EMAIL

Email Defra at [water.resources@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:water.resources@defra.gsi.gov.uk)  
Please put **Portsmouth Water Draft Drought Plan** in the subject line.



## WRITE

Write to Defra at:  
**Secretary of State,  
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)  
Drought Plan consultation  
(Portsmouth Water – Draft Drought Plan)  
Water Resources  
Area 3D  
Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR**

# Thank you

# 10 questions we'd like to ask you

We're asking 10 questions which will help us update this plan so it reflects your views.

You can answer these online at [portsmouthwater.co.uk/droughtplan](http://portsmouthwater.co.uk/droughtplan) or send your answers to Defra using the contact details on the opposite page. Thank you for your time.



- 1 Do you think the different stages of drought we use are easy to understand?
- 2 What do you think is the best way for us to tell you about a drought and restrictions?
- 3 Do you understand the restrictions we can introduce under temporary use bans and drought orders?
- 4 Do you agree with the phases in which we would introduce restrictions as less water is available during a drought?
- 5 Do you agree with the exemptions from water restrictions? Are there others you think we should consider?
- 6 Do you support the drought permit we have included?
- 7 Do you think we have balanced the need to supply water with the need to protect the environment during a drought?
- 8 Do you think it is ever okay to introduce emergency restrictions such as standpipes (water pipes in streets) or rota cuts (where water is only available for a few hours each day)?
- 9 Do you think there is anything else we should include in our drought plan?
- 10 How did you hear about the consultation for this drought plan?



Read our full Drought Plan  
and have your say at  
[portsmouthwater.co.uk/droughtplan](https://portsmouthwater.co.uk/droughtplan)

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