



Pollution Incident Reduction Plan 2025

Our approach to
environmental
stewardship



Foreword



Every day we provide clean, high-quality drinking water to around eight million people across the North West of England, taking away the wastewater to safely treat it before returning it to the environment. We do this 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It's something we're committed to getting right and something we're very proud of.

Our network of sewers is around 77,300 kilometres in length – enough

to reach twice around the earth. Most of the time the activities involved in producing clean drinking water and treating the North West's wastewater are completed without complication. However, we know that sometimes things go wrong, resulting in an unplanned discharge to the local water environment, which can cause harm – known as pollution incidents. Other parties have activities which can cause harm to the water environment too, such as industry, agriculture and illegal disposal of wastes. We are committed to reducing the number of pollution events caused by United Utilities and are striving to achieve zero pollution incidents.

In 2024 our pollution rate increased, and so we have put in an extra £20 million of targeted investment to reduce pollution incidents and get our plan back on track. This approach – using a fast learning and response cycle – is key to making effective progress as we near the end of our Turnaround Plan and seek to achieve good performance in line with the Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA) measures set by the Environment Agency (EA) for 2025.

There has been a lot of focus over the past 18 months on spills from our storm overflows (also known as combined sewer overflows or CSOs) into the environment. Where we're made aware of activations from overflows which occur outside of these conditions and cause impact, we treat them as pollution incidents and they will be captured in our plan. If you'd like to know specifically what we're doing to reduce spills from CSOs and other assets operated by us, take a look at our Better Rivers, Better North West plan.

Our Better Rivers, Better North West plan

Pollution incidents occur for a wide variety of reasons, so stopping all pollutions doesn't have a simple one size fits all solution. It requires us to think about our processes and assets as a system to make interventions and provide focus across our end-to-end system; from the way we get alerted to problems, how we respond, right through to our data management, assurance and reporting processes. From our dedicated operational front-line colleagues reacting to incidents to the steadfast analysts and engineers crunching the data to help make plans for the future, we all know how important environmental protection is to our customers – it is important to us too. As you will see, our plan takes into account many areas of improvement from the start to finish of any pollution incident.

Our last Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) was published and launched in March 2023, covering the remainder of AMP7 (the five-year asset management period from April 2020 to March 2025).

We delivered 18 initiatives across the business to address the leading causes of our pollution incidents. These projects included:

- Increasing resilience to mains power supplies
- Proactive blockage reduction programme
- Enhanced maintenance excellence strategy
- Dynamic Network Management
- Training
- Simplifying pollution reporting
- Stakeholder engagement and customer education
- Better root cause analysis

Our next PIRP sets out how we see our role of environmental stewards and how we're continuing to focus on removing all environmentally impacting pollution events as we deliver our AMP8 ambitions. This plan has received endorsement from the board, which regularly reviews pollution performance and will monitor delivery of this plan to ensure it's on track.

The North West is a precious and beautiful part of Britain, with National Parks and sensitive areas, such as bathing waters, so our responsibility and duty is to protect these. I want to be honest with customers that there's still a long way to go in tackling pollution incidents and what causes them, but our plan is clear on how we aim to do this and truly become a stronger, greener and healthier region.

Lou Beardmore
Chief Executive Officer

**Pollution
reduction is
our number
one priority**

**£20m
of targeted
investment in
pollution
reduction
in 2025**



Executive summary

We are privileged to provide essential water and wastewater services to over three million homes and 200,000 businesses across our region.

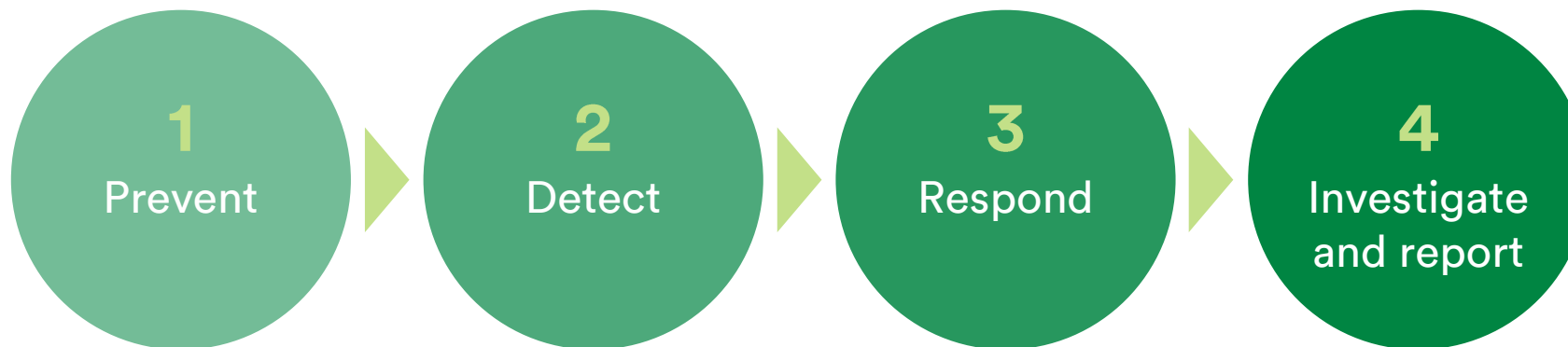
We're committed to doing this in a transparent, resilient way, providing high-quality value for money services. One of the ways we seek to do this is by reducing pollution incidents which cause harm to the environment. We made good progress in AMP7 and we continue to build on the foundations laid to execute our ambitious plans at pace.

Our latest iteration of our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan continues the theme of **Prevent, Detect, Respond, Investigate and report** that we introduced in our previous plan. We believe it clearly sets out the role we take very seriously, that of environmental stewardship. We remain committed to accelerating improvements in our pollution performance as we recognise we have more to do.

Our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan sets out our ambition to continue to drive down pollution incidents in a sustainable way, taking the next step in the journey to zero pollution incidents for customers and the environment. We recognise our performance needs to improve and we failed to achieve some key pollution targets in 2024 – something we are confident our AMP8 plans address.

We need to do more to reach the goal of zero harm to waterways from our assets despite the backdrop of climate change and increasingly extreme weather, which will impact our day-to-day operations in the years to come. Building more resilience across our assets is a primary focus, to ensure they operate reliably – regardless of the weather conditions we face.

We've achieved a lot in AMP7 and we need to continue to build on these foundations to go bigger and faster towards our zero pollution ambition.





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01 About United Utilities

- We serve around 8 million people across the North West
- Our network of sewers is around 77,300 kilometres in length – enough to reach twice around the earth
- We treat an average of 3.1 billion litres of wastewater every day
- We have 34 designated bathing areas in our region that we help to look after



Facing the challenge

Our purpose is to provide great water for a stronger, greener and healthier North West. Our business model enables us to deliver on our purpose both now and in the future. We're proud of the role we have played, and continue to play, and we constantly check our progress against our objectives. We've made significant investments in the assets and systems that provide essential services to people and businesses across the region and have demonstrated the benefits of this investment through reducing pollution incidents. We want to go further to reduce pollution incidents even more. Ultimately, we want to prevent all pollution incidents which cause environmental harm.

We know this is going to be a challenge as we face external pressures outside of our control, such as climate change, population growth and consumer trends. Together with the cost-of-living crisis, it means that now more than ever we need to invest wisely and operate as efficiently as possible.

Climate change brings more extreme weather, which impacts our assets in ways we cannot always plan for, and puts extra demands on the systems in ways it has not been designed to operate in. Higher temperatures mean the water environment is less resilient to other pressures put on it, like waste discharges and run-off from activities such as agriculture.

Population growth and customer trends can be more predictable than climate change but can cause more acute impacts as the use of land in the wastewater catchment changes – leading to more surface water run-off into the sewer network and ultimately placing extra demand on our systems. We are working to remove surface water where possible and support the use of sustainable drainage systems to help with this too.

As you'll see in this report, we have taken strides to reduce the pollution incidents that occur across the North West. We take our responsibilities seriously and we want to do more.



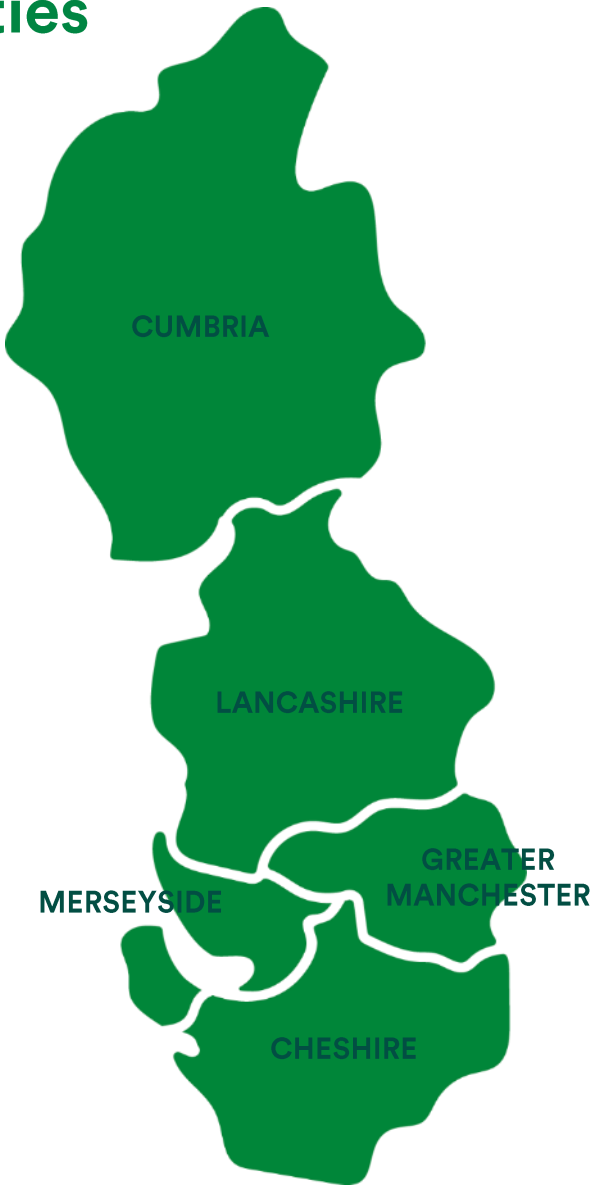
Delivering for our five counties

The North West is an exciting region, with unique and diverse needs, challenges and opportunities across its five counties. Recognising this, we engaged with stakeholders and customers in Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire to shape our plans for each county for the 2025–30 period, addressing the things they told us matter most.

Building individual county plans means we will deliver outcomes that are tailored for customers in the places where they live – making our investment plans and the benefits they will deliver more meaningful to customers and communities.

To deliver these plans at pace and with purpose, we mobilised our teams into county delivery squads, driving more local ownership and accountability.

This is a step change to how we’ve previously operated and we are confident it will enable us to deliver even better service to our customers and the environment.



Around 8 million people and 200,000 businesses – by 2050 we’ll serve around 1 million more

The fourth smallest region by size, with the third largest population

Diverse communities with different levels of prosperity and needs

Levelling up is a priority, and devolution is advanced with two city regions

12% of households are affected by water poverty, more than 50% higher than the national average

40% more rainfall than the industry average

New environmental requirements are driving unprecedented long-term investment

A legacy of industrial heritage and heavy manufacturing based on Victorian infrastructure

A growing economy, which contributes 10% of national GDP

Stronger, greener, healthier: our plan for the North West

We are constantly reviewing our plans for the future and our progress to ensure we're delivering on the key areas that we know are important to our regulators, the Government and, most importantly, our customers.

Our ambitious business plan for 2025 to 2030 will see us deliver the largest investment in water and wastewater infrastructure in more than a century, bringing a step change to tackle those issues that matter the most – from reliable water supplies to cleaner rivers and bathing waters – helping to make the North West stronger, greener and healthier.

Our business plan for 2025–30



- ✓ Investing **£975 million** in a programme to build a more resilient network, fixing leaks and replacing 95 kilometres of old pipes and mains
- ✓ Improving water quality for **1.4 million** customers
- ✓ Safeguarding water supplies for over **2 million** customers
- ✓ Improving the quality of our rivers by reducing storm overflow spills by **60%** over the decade to 2030
- ✓ Protecting and enhancing over **500 kilometres** of rivers and improving our bathing waters and shellfish beds
- ✓ Strengthening our network against increased rainfall to **reduce flooding** of homes and businesses
- ✓ Working with local authorities to separate rainwater from our systems so we build **more resilient communities** as we all respond to the impacts of climate change such as flooding



What is a pollution incident?

A pollution incident is the unauthorised discharge of a substance from any of our assets which proceeds to come into contact with surface waters or a watercourse. The Environment Agency (EA) has a method of categorising pollution incidents based on the severity of impact to the environment.

You may have seen in the media articles about spills from sewers into rivers. Spills are not necessarily pollution incidents. In the event of heavy rainfall, for example, we are allowed under the permits issued to us by the EA to spill wastewater into rivers at this time. This is because the heavy rain will mean any effluent is diluted to a level which will not impact the environment. Spills are, therefore, not included in our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan. However, our Better Rivers, Better North West plan explains what we're doing to reduce spills to the environment.

Our Better Rivers, Better North West plan



Wastewater pollution incidents

The majority of our pollution incidents occur in our wastewater network, which measures 77,300 kilometres in sewer network length. As well as sewers, we have 2,794 network sewage pumping stations and 565 sewage treatment works that can experience failures and risk sewage entering the watercourse.

A high proportion of our sewers are combined sewers, which is a single pipe system that collects both wastewater from homes and businesses and rainwater or surface water from roads and roofs. These can become overloaded, leading to overflows of untreated sewage and surface water into rivers or other water bodies.

Clean water pollution incidents

Although less common, we remain vigilant to the risks of our clean water pipes causing pollution incidents. Each year, we have approximately 32,000 burst pipes, and during these bursts there is a risk that treated drinking water can escape and be released into a watercourse. The sheer force and volume of the water can risk disturbing the riverbed and cause a pollution. Additionally, if pipes taking untreated raw water to treatment sites burst, this can also cause a pollution incident.

At United Utilities, we constantly monitor our assets, physically and using technology, to help us proactively identify any risks of pollution.

How do we respond to pollution incidents?

Through our extensive network of monitors and sensors, we are able to identify when a pollution incident may be about to take place and take action quickly to prevent, detect, respond and investigate and report appropriately.

This data, and how we use it, is constantly evolving and enables us to prioritise – informing how to respond to get the maximum effectiveness from our resources while protecting the environment. As we develop our use of technology and artificial intelligence capability, we will continue to improve our accuracy in predicting future pollution incidents.

We have a zero-pollution ambition and recognise every pollution incident is one too many. Our post-incident processes are rigorous in understanding and investigating what went wrong as well as putting actions in place to avoid repeat incidents. This insight continues to inform our investment plans.



02 Our past performance

- In 2024, we executed our plan successfully and invested in areas we are confident will lead to improvements in our pollution performance in future years
- Our performance on serious pollution incidents is industry leading
- Over AMP7, we have invested £100 million installing alarms and monitors to enable us to proactively and reactively identify incidents that could cause a pollution
- We know we have more to do





Progress against our action plan

In 2023, we published our last Pollution Incident Reduction Plan, and we're pleased to report that we've completed all the actions within the agreed timescales. To ensure impartial auditing we commissioned Jacobs to carry out an external verification audit, which required us to prove that we have done what we said we would do. We're pleased to confirm that we passed, with 17 actions audited and assured as delivered. We will continue to track our new 2025 plan and report on its completion.

Project number	Project name	Theme	Outcome	Status
1	Resilience to mains power failures	Prevent	Sites at high risk of having pollution incidents due to mains power failures have interventions and mitigation put in place to make them more resilient.	Scope fully delivered
2	Risk management through visibility of asset availability	Prevent	Operational and monitoring teams will have better understanding of the availability of assets on sites (utilising real-time data), meaning they can put better mitigation in place and respond to other triggers sooner.	Scope fully delivered
3	Helping customers reduce misconnections	Prevent	Fewer private misconnections will reduce wastewater which should be treated going into surface water drains and causing pollution incidents.	Scope fully delivered
4	Customer campaigns	Prevent	Customers will be better informed about pollution incidents and how to prevent them by only flushing the 3 Ps (Pee, Poo and toilet Paper) and not disposing of fats down drains.	Scope fully delivered
5	Maintenance Excellence workbank review	Prevent	Ensuring we have the right maintenance strategy and maintenance tasks being deployed to our assets preventing asset failure and protecting our environment.	Scope fully delivered
6	Increasing SuDS (sustainable drainage systems)	Prevent	Better separation of wastewater and surface water will mean our sewers will not get as overwhelmed by heavy rainfall events.	Scope fully delivered
7	Blockage reduction programme	Prevent	We will be removing blockages from our network before they cause an impact to customers or the environment.	Scope fully delivered
8	Improved asset performance monitoring	Prevent	Operational and monitoring teams will have better understanding of how well assets on sites are performing, (utilising handheld asset condition equipment and online asset condition systems), meaning they can put better mitigation in place and respond to other triggers sooner.	Scope fully delivered
9	River Ranger roles	Detect	More eyes and ears on our rivers, engaging with customers and spotting problems on our networks so that we can respond to potential pollution incidents more quickly.	Scope fully delivered



Progress against our action plan

Project number	Project name	Theme	Outcome	Status
10	Making it easier to report pollution incidents to UU	Detect	Working with search engines to make it easier to find how to report a pollution incident to us and new pollution reporting webpage on our website.	Scope fully delivered
11	Dynamic Network Management (DNM)	Detect	Increasing the information we have on how well our sewer network is performing with the installation of thousands of monitors which report to a central team and enabling them to initiate responses to problems sooner.	Scope fully delivered
12	Refined alarm/alert management and response to incidents	Detect	Working to improve our already excellent monitoring and control function to make better informed decisions about when and how to respond to alarms. This will mean risks are managed better and real incidents are responded to more quickly.	Scope fully delivered
13	Zero repeat pollution incidents	Respond	When pollution incidents do occur, making sure we have processes in place to investigate and prevent the same thing happening again in the same place.	Scope fully delivered
14	External expert water quality assessments	Respond	When pollution incidents occur which could be serious, making sure we have external experts available to support in our investigations, so the true environmental impact is understood – enabling us to better respond.	Scope fully delivered
15	Extreme weather, enhanced contingency and emergency response plans	Respond	Having plans in place to ensure the impacts of climate change and extreme weather are mitigated as far as possible.	Scope fully delivered
16	Mitigation vehicles	Respond	Having specific vehicles in place to respond to overland pollution incidents promptly, meaning wastewater and sewage is prevented from entering the water course as far as possible.	Scope fully delivered
17	Refining our pollution procedures and processes	Investigate and report	Clear, concise procedures and governance processes which ensure appropriate pollution responses and transparent reporting to stakeholders.	Scope fully delivered
18	Role-specific pollution training	Investigate and report	Training which is specific to the person and their role in pollution prevention, detection, response, investigation or reporting.	On track to be delivered by January 2026



Incident reduction benefit reporting

We are proud of our progress since our last published Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (2023) and are delighted to report we exceeded the actual incident reductions we committed to. We continue to learn and evolve and look to transform our ways of working to drive further benefit towards our ambition of zero pollution incidents.

Focus area	Theme	Activity	Proposed 2024 incident reduction	Actual incident reduction
Operational Excellence	Prevent	Power resilience improvements	20	23
		Blockage reduction activity at wastewater treatment works	4	5
		Asset rehabilitation/replacement	3	6
		Proactive cleaning and maintenance improvements	55	58
Customer Awareness	Prevent	Customer engagement	3	4
		River Rangers	3	5
Proactive Monitoring	Detect	Predictive analytics	17	13
		Auto pump unblocking (DERAGGER)	12	12
Enhanced Asset Reliability	Prevent	Power resilience programme	60	40
		Maintenance strategy improvements	8	20
		Condition monitoring	9	20
TOTALS			194	206

Statement from Jacobs Auditing Service

Jacobs UK Ltd was appointed by United Utilities Water Limited to provide independent technical assurance of their Pollution Incident Reduction Plan 2023 (PIRP 2023) action delivery for the period March 2023 to March 2025.



The independent assurance/verification was completed over 2 phases, with the assurance of the first tranche of 6 actions (delivered between March 2023 and July 2024) completed in December 2024. The second phase of assurance, included the assurance of the remaining 11 actions (which were to be delivered by UU between August 2024 and March 2025). Jacobs have reviewed the processes, outcomes and supporting evidence on which the actions are based. Based on their audit work, we are satisfied that the actions listed have been satisfactorily achieved.



2024 highlights

2024 was a year of challenge but also a year we are proud of in many ways. We continued to execute our plan and invest wisely in areas we are confident will yield rewards in our pollution improvement plans in future years. Here are a few of our highlights.

Improved
1,476 kilometres
of rivers through
capital schemes



Spent
£311m
to increase
storm storage



Removed
3,855 tonnes
of fats, oils and
grease from the
network

Achieved a
6%
reduction in customer
behaviour-related
blockages, from 11,839 in
2023 to 11,106 in 2024



Surveyed
575,210 metres
of sewer and cleaned
202,442 metres



Spent
£1.4m
on our wet well
pumping station
cleaning
programme

Installed
340
monitors to target
high-risk pollution
areas



Spent
£1.6m
to improve and
upgrade pumping
stations



Water quality regulation

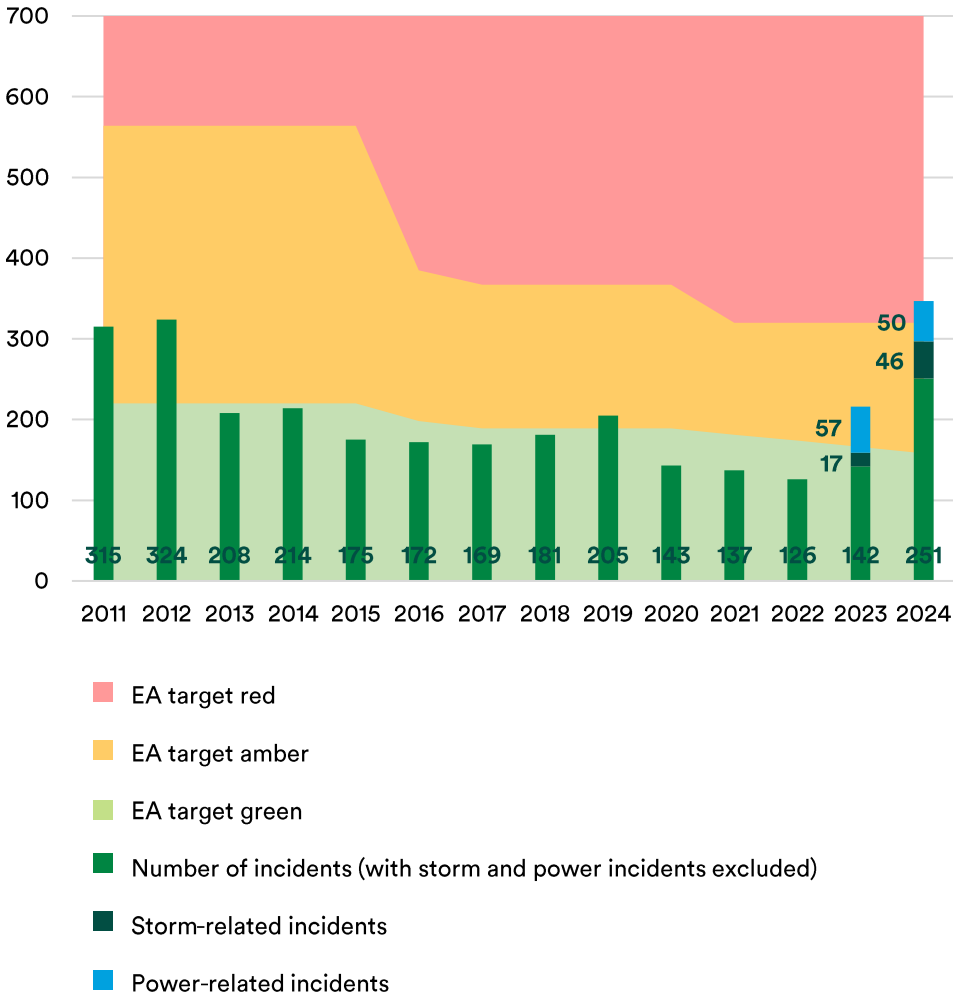
Our overall performance and impact on the environment is closely monitored by the Environment Agency (EA). In 2011, the EA introduced the Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA) to compare performance between water companies and across years across seven metrics, three of which are related to pollution incidents and are shown below. We are proud of our track record. We have proven in previous years what we are capable of, and we are determined to get back to industry-leading performance on total pollution incidents. Our serious pollution performance remains one of the best compared with other water companies. Undoubtedly, our performance has been impacted by an increase in storm conditions and the fact we have installed more monitoring to alert us to incidents which previously may have gone unnoticed. Our focus and efforts are greater than ever, and we are confident we have the right plans to get our overall performance back to industry leading.

Serious pollution incidents (sewerage and water supply assets)	Category 1 and 2 pollution incidents
Total pollution incidents	Category 1, 2 and 3 pollution incidents
Self-reporting of pollution incidents	The percentage of category 1, 2 and 3 pollution incidents self-reported by a water company to the EA

EA guidance categorises pollution incidents based on their impact. We use these categories when tracking performance and setting targets, and they are referred to throughout this plan:

Category 1 – major, serious, persistent, and/or extensive impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
Category 2 – significant impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
Category 3 – minor or minimal impact or effect on the environment, people and/or property
Category 4 – substantial incident with no impact

Pollution incidents and EPA target with storm and power incidents



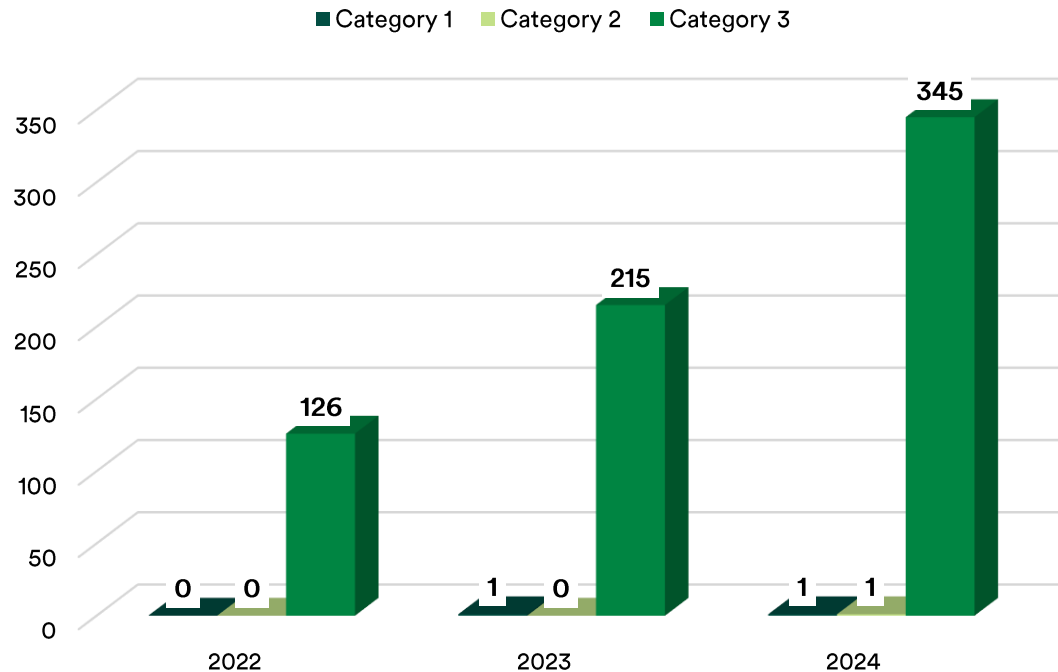


Serious and total pollution performance

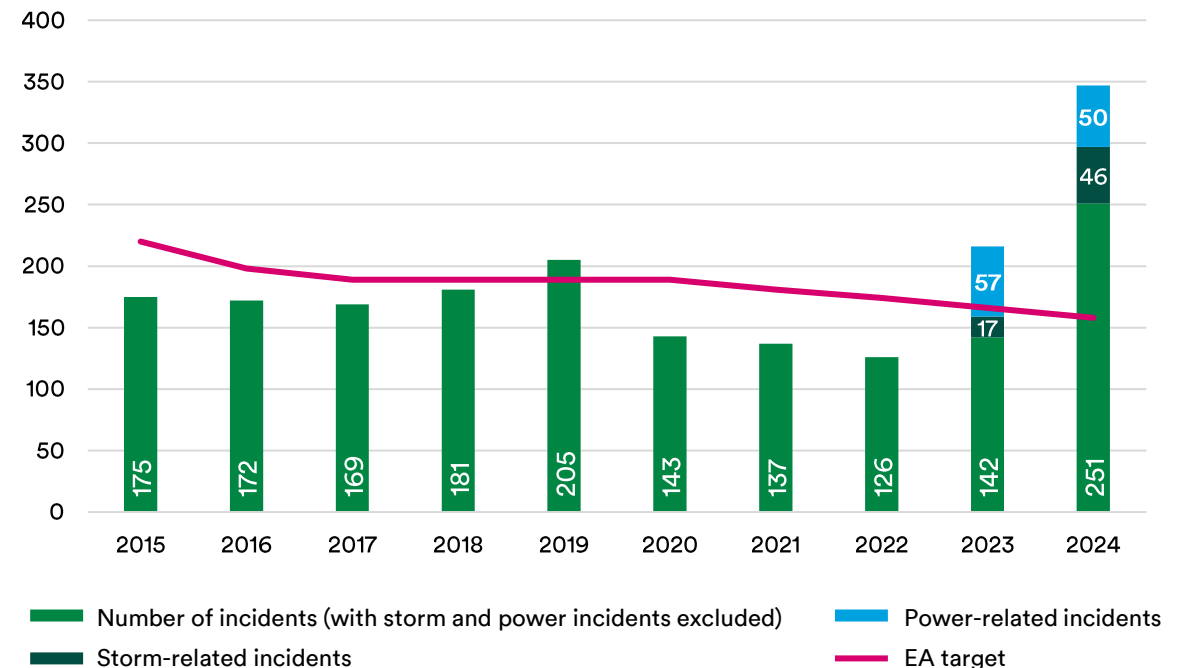
Having historically performed strongly on our total pollution targets, we are disappointed not to have met our total target on pollution incidents in 2024. This is an area we are committed to improving on. We remain extremely proud of our sustained performance on serious pollution incidents having achieved EPA green standard since 2011. We had zero serious pollution incidents in 2019, 2020 and 2022 and met our EPA target throughout AMP7.

From 2023 onwards, regulations changed and all pollution incidents due to power failure or storm-related issues are now included in our reported numbers. This has had a significant impact on our reported performance, and although difficult to foresee, we remain steadfast in our efforts to tackle these issues.

Yearly total pollution incidents



Category 1–3 pollution incidents compared with EA target with storm and power incidents





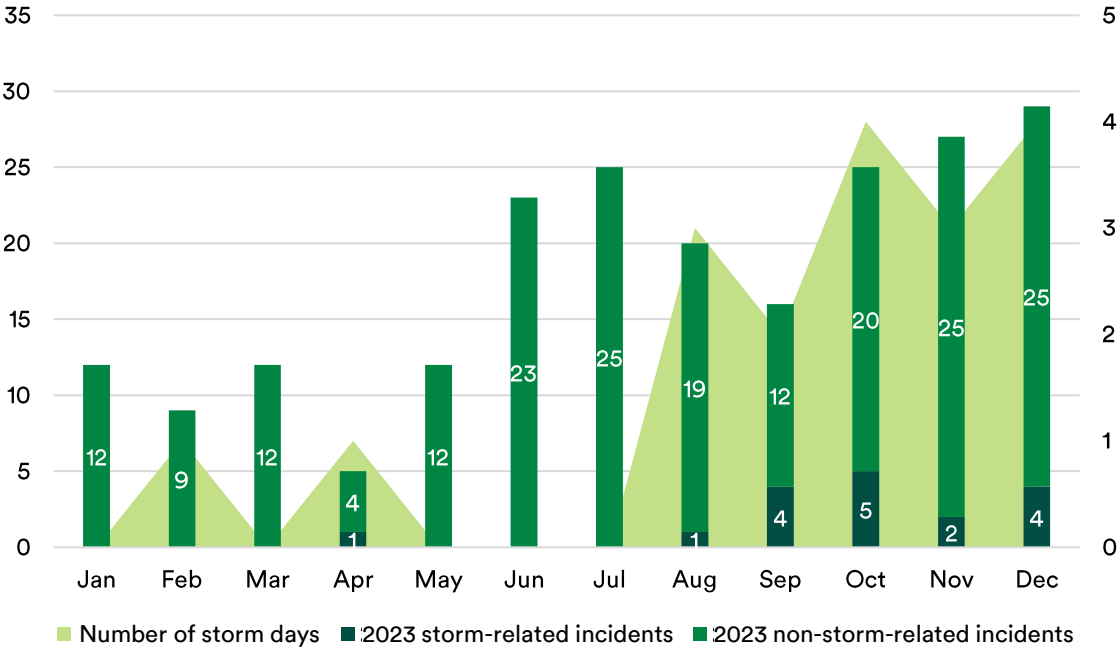
The impact of climate change and storms

The effects of climate change can be extremely challenging to navigate. We’re experiencing more extreme rainfall events and freezing temperatures followed by rapid thawing and prolonged dry periods, increasing the risk of pollution incidents.

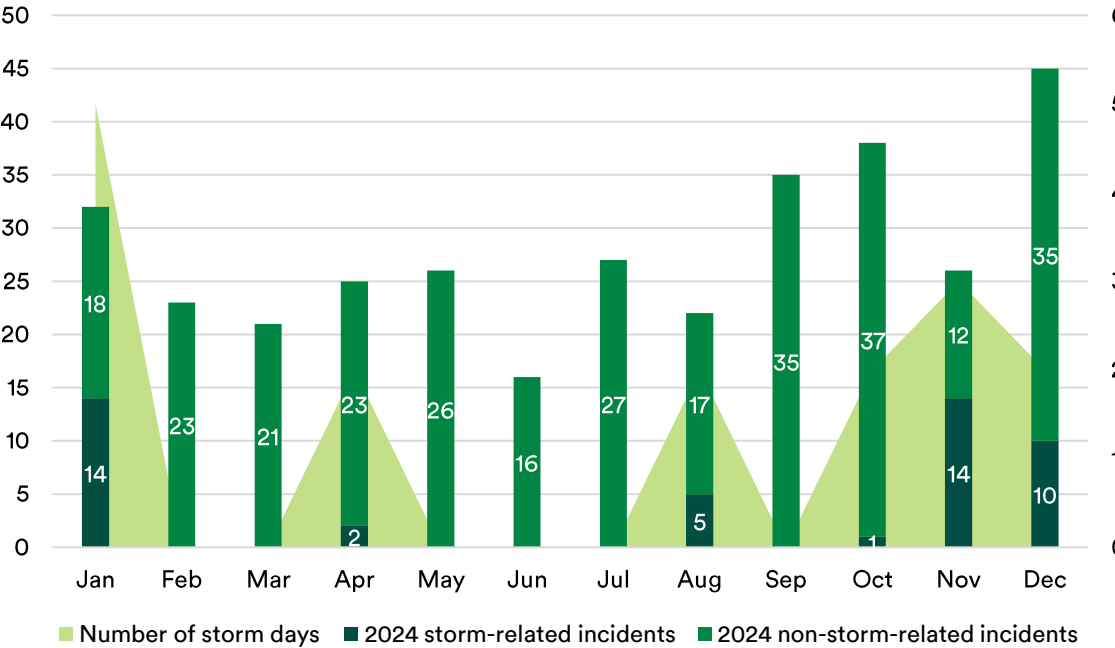
These graphs show pollution incidents for 2023 and 2024, and the storms that we have experienced in those years in comparison to incidents.

The data shows how storms have a significant impact on our pollution incident numbers. Prior to 2023, any pollution incidents related to a named storm were deemed as a matter beyond our reasonable control and therefore we reported them differently. From 2023 onwards, and in line with current regulation, we report all pollution incidents in the same way – regardless of cause. The dark green bars show how many incidents were storm related.

Incidents vs. storm days by month
2023



Incidents vs. storm days by month
2024



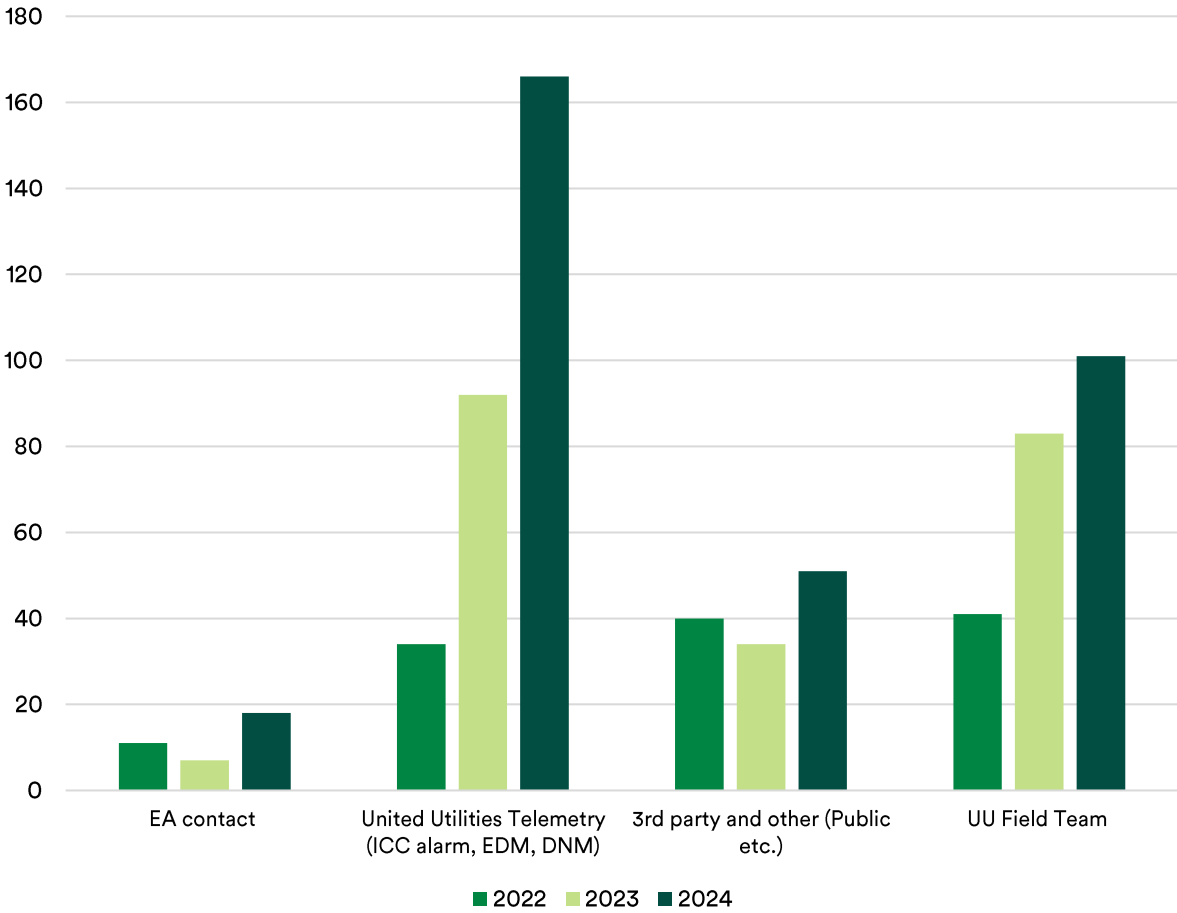
Increasing our telemetry

Over AMP7, we invested £100 million overall in installing alarms and monitors to enable us to better proactively and reactively identify incidents that could cause a pollution. This level of intelligence is a cornerstone to our pollution reduction plan and although the number of incidents we have reported has increased in recent years, this is directly related to the level of telemetry we have installed and are actively monitoring.

In 2022, only 27% of our incidents were reported to us by our telemetry; this went up to 49% in 2024. The increase is due to the implementation of additional monitoring across the network, and we plan to do more in this space. The more intelligence we have, the more we can take action to protect the environment.



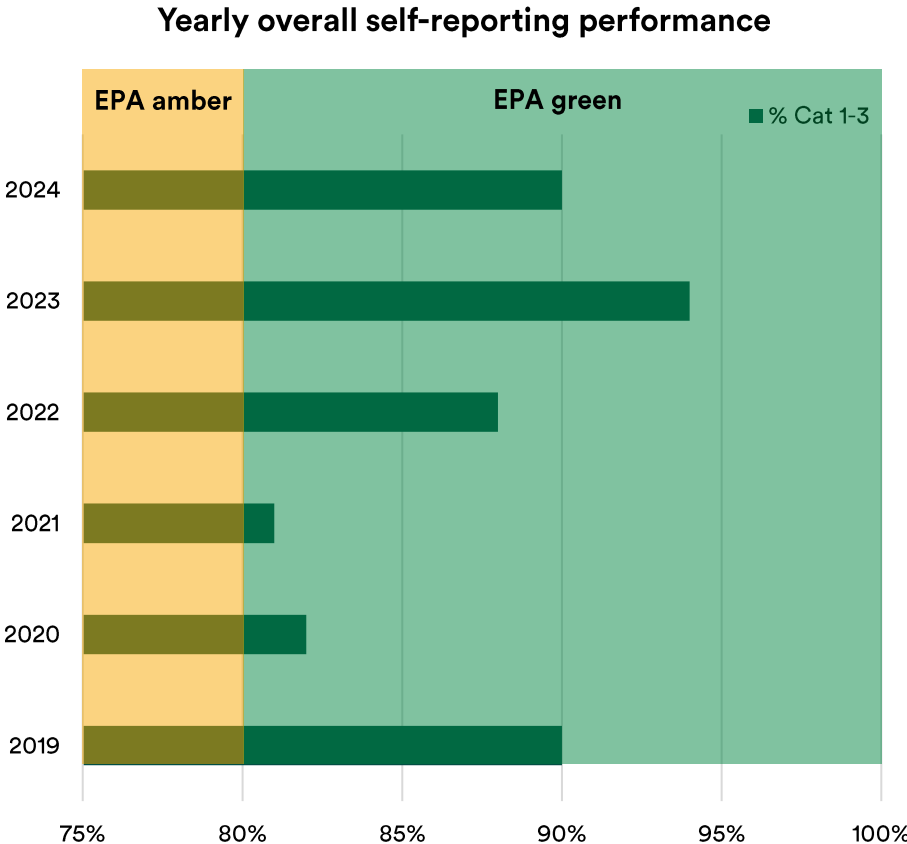
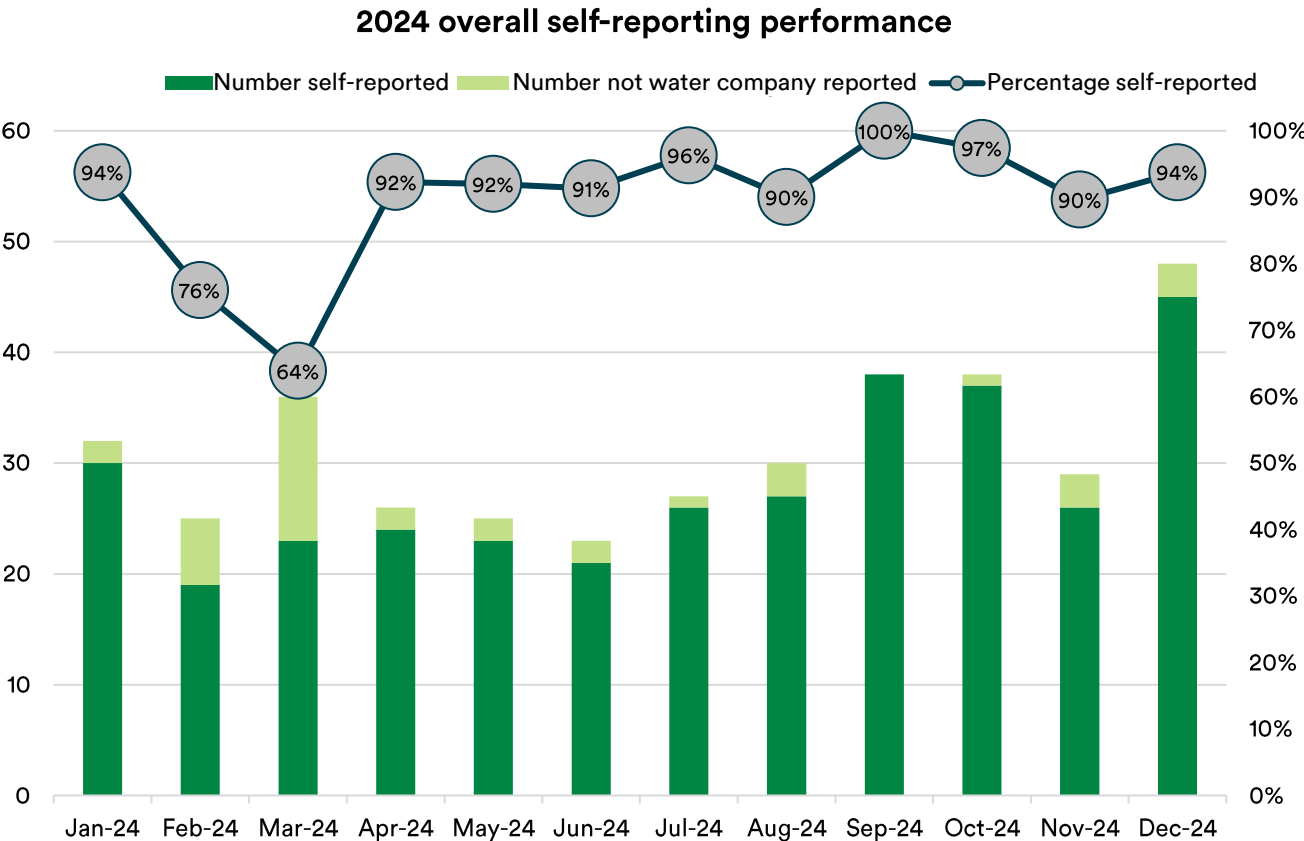
Pollution incidents received from report
2022–2024





Self-reporting

We take our responsibility seriously and strive to be transparent in all we do. We have a proven track record of high performance on self-reporting during the AMP7 period, consistently achieving EPA green threshold. We continue to review our internal processes to strive for even higher performance but are proud of what we have achieved so far.

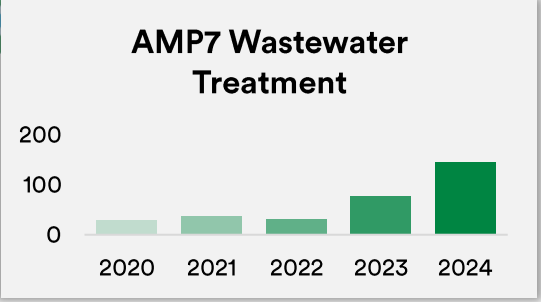
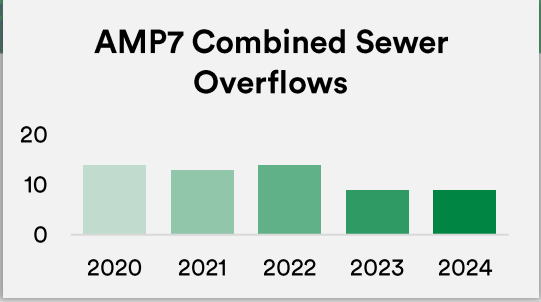
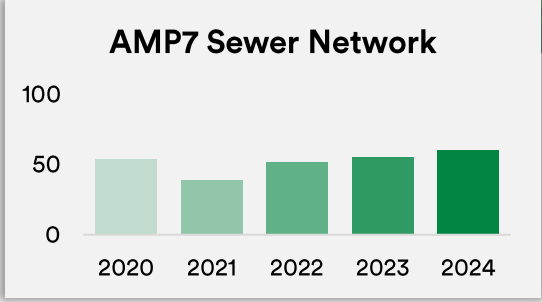
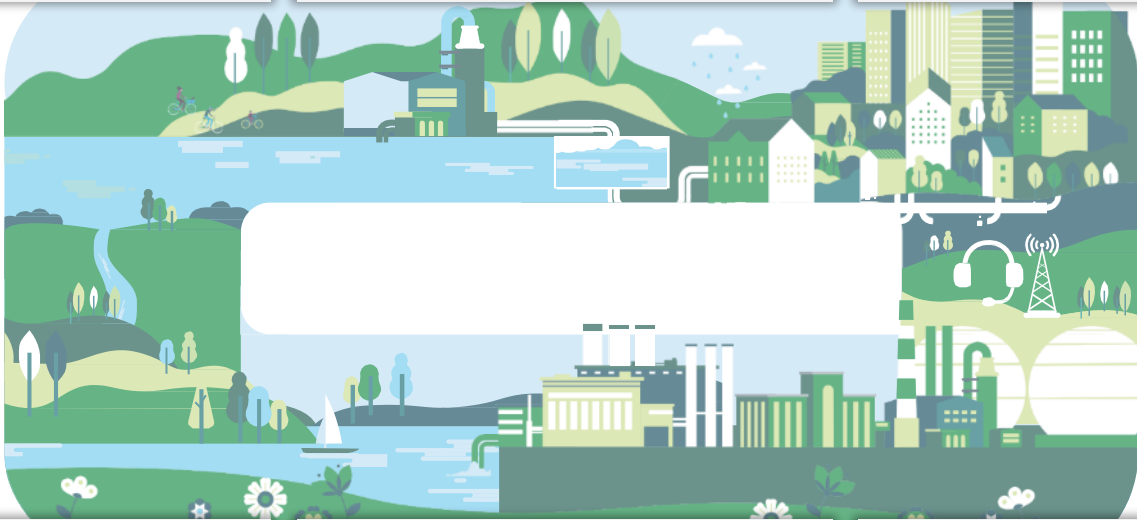
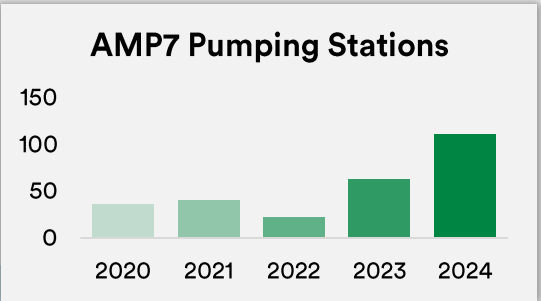
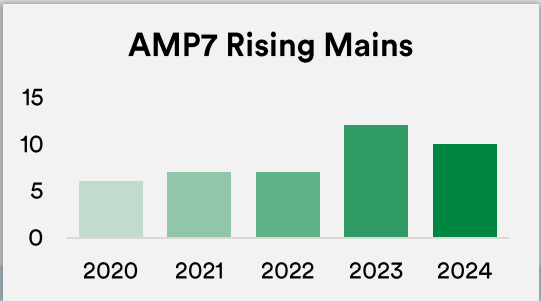
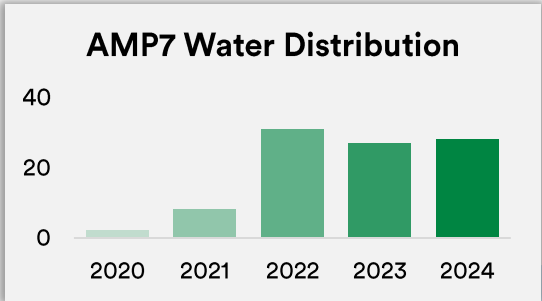




Pollution incidents by asset type

Our core activities cover each stage of the water cycle.

These graphs show the breakdown of total pollution incidents by asset type over the AMP7 period. This is something we monitor closely, and our analysis informs our day-to-day activity and investment.





Windermere: our 'regional treasure'

Windermere is part of our county of Cumbria. It is the largest natural lake in England and a place of true beauty, which attracts many visitors from far and wide. We have been working to protect and improve Windermere's water quality for many years, taking responsibility for everything within our control and supporting others to act in any way they can to safeguard the lake for many generations to come.

We've been listening to what people have to say – and no-one wants to see sewage from storm overflows discharged into rivers. We get that, and are up and running with an ambitious transformation plan to tackle this, investing £200 million in Windermere to help improve and protect the water quality of the lake.

Combined sewer overflows (CSOs) have been an important part of the sewerage network for over 150 years, designed to avoid the risk of flooding of homes and businesses in heavy rainfall. Reducing the use of CSOs will need a re-plumb of the drainage system across the North West, combined with introducing nature-based solutions, such as reed beds, to achieve this. The full solution can't happen overnight, but we remain committed to bringing the improvements we all want to see, and we are making good progress.

We are continuing to trial innovative ways to achieve our ambition at pace. We have a pilot running to connect customers for the first time to a public sewer network and off septic tanks in Ambleside, Skelwith Bridge and Tower Wood. We are also exploring the use of drones to monitor and assess continuous water quality in the lake. We won't stop until we have delivered the improvements we have committed to.

Over the last year...

- ✓ Total pollution incidents have reduced by **44%**
- ✓ Category 3 pollution incidents have reduced by **89%**
- ✓ Duration of spills has reduced by **75%**
- ✓ Number of spills has reduced by **64%**
- ✓ Chair and ringfenced project team have been appointed
- ✓ Infrastructure delivery on track for **six** storm overflows and **nine** treatment works





Stop the Block: beating blockages on the network

Our data shows that the main cause of pollution incidents is blockages. We record and monitor blockages on the sewer network and more than 60% of blockages are caused by customer behaviour, i.e. flushing products, such as wet wipes, down the toilet and pouring cooking fats, oils and grease into drains. Blockages reduce capacity and restrict the flow of wastewater through the network, which can lead to the operation of storm overflows and spills into waterways.

Over the last five years, we have delivered a programme of engagement with household customers and Food Service Establishments (FSEs) to raise awareness of 'what not to flush/pour' down drains. The aim of the programme of work has been to influence behaviour change to reduce the number of customer-caused blockages.

Our 'Stop the Block!' campaign, a series of multi-channel regional and hyper-local communications activities targeted at household customers, has delivered year-on-year increases in awareness of 'what not to flush' and 'what not to pour'. Through our tracker surveys, customers report that the campaign messaging has made them more conscious of what shouldn't be flushed down the toilet or poured down the drain. From FY21 to FY25, we have seen a 27% reduction in wet wipe blockages.

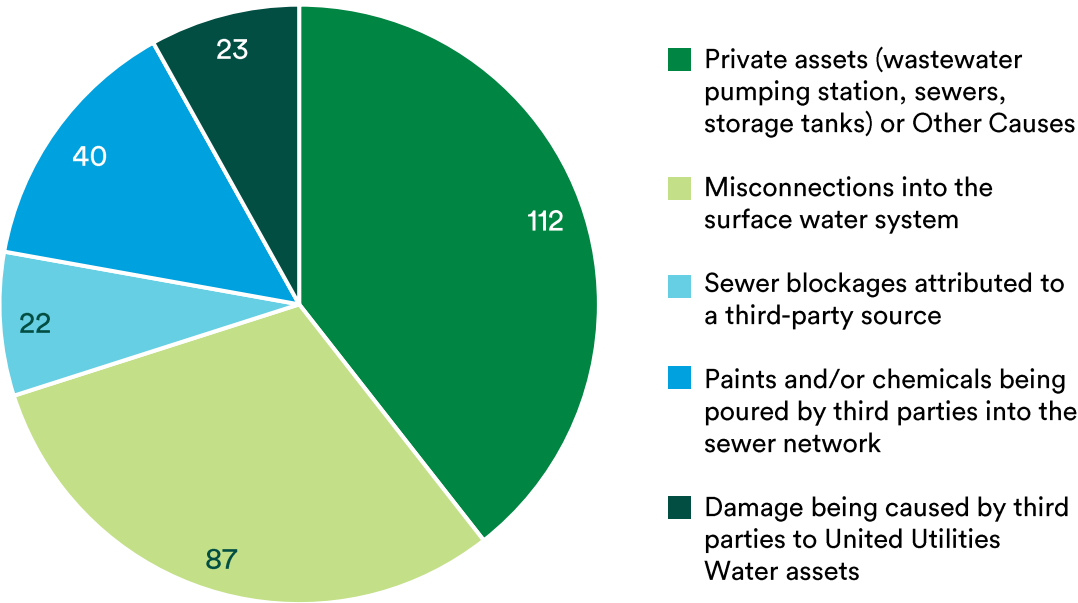
Through our work with Environmental Compliance and Services (ECAS), we have continued to educate and engage with FSEs both on a reactive and proactive basis. By building relationships with these catering businesses, we have prevented 3,800 tonnes of cooking fat, oil and grease from entering the sewer network.



Pollution insights

There were 284 third-party incidents recorded on the company pollution database in 2024. The breakdown of third-party root causes is shown in the pie chart below.

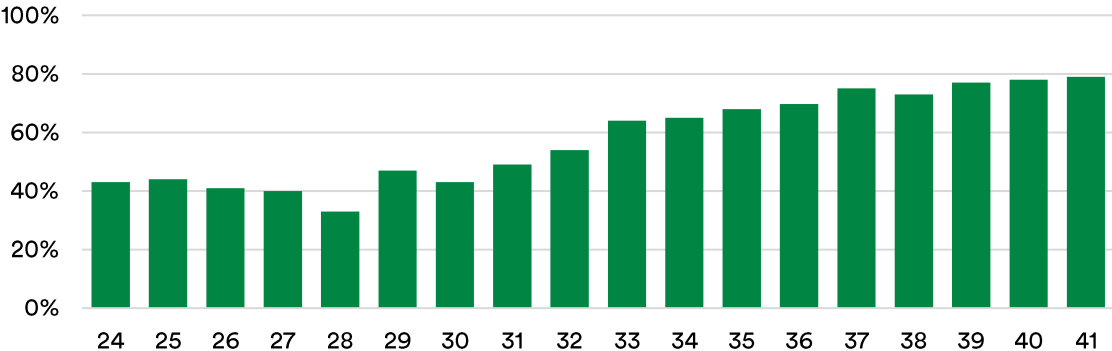
Cause of third-party incidents 2024



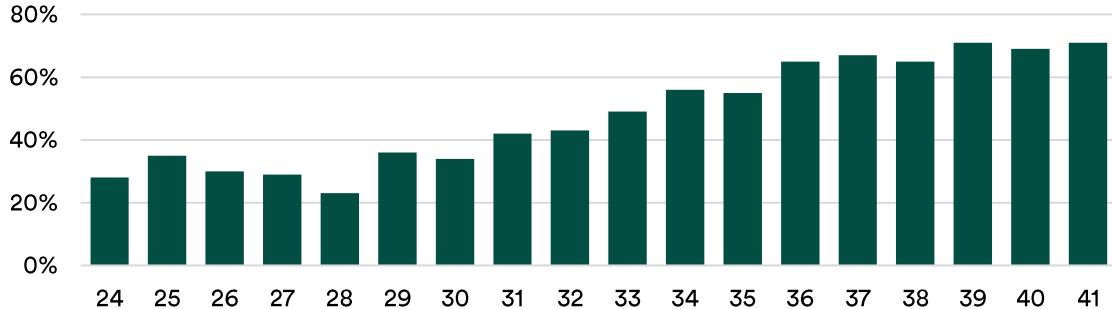
What not to flush and pour/Stop the Block campaigns

Customer awareness is displayed in the below graphs based on waves (targeted campaigns three times a year).

What not to flush down the toilet (% aware) by wave



What not to put down sinks and drains (% aware) by wave



Key achievements in AMP7



River Rangers

As well as forging closer links with local community groups and organisations, our team of River Rangers proactively patrol the banks of rivers across the North West, clearing litter and debris and organising maintenance. They also carry out sampling so we can better understand river water quality.



Dynamic Network Management (DNM)

Through the use of sensors in our sewers to give us real-time information about our assets, and artificial intelligence to identify changes in their performance, we can respond to developing issues before they have an impact on customers or the environment.



Battery energy storage system (BESS)

We've successfully installed battery energy storage systems on two of our high-risk sites, which have since had zero power-related pollution incidents. These systems use batteries to store electricity at times when supply is higher than demand, releasing it later when needed.



Fighting FOG in the food service industry

We work with food service establishments to support them on the safe disposal of fats, oils and grease (FOG) to avoid the costly removal of blockages from their drains and help prevent the risk of sewer flooding – reducing the impact on local waterways and the environment.



03 Our plan for 2025–30

We're proposing the largest investment in water and wastewater infrastructure in over 100 years.





How we've developed this PIRP

We've delivered on the first two iterations of the Pollution Incident Reduction Plan spanning a five-year period, as demonstrated in section 02, but we don't want to stop there. We have big aspirations and stretching targets to reduce pollution incidents to zero as soon as possible. That's why we've created this latest version of our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan.

We have focused our efforts on improving our approach in understanding root causes, asset maintenance, training and trialling innovation, learning at every step. This learning has shaped our new plan, which has been brought together with the help of subject matter experts from across our operational, customer-facing, communications and reporting and regulatory teams. We believe our new plan seeks to enhance our performance across every aspect of pollution, from how we engage with customers and respond to incidents quickly and effectively right through to how we report to our regulators and other interested parties.

We've held workshops with these colleagues to draw on their experience and, supported by what our data shows, developed projects and action plans to make a real difference.

Environmental stewardship – our role

We want to be leaders in the water industry when it comes to environmental performance.

In this next phase, as customers' and regulators' expectations of us grow, we want to be seen for our approach to being environmental stewards. We know what a precious resource the water environment is and strive to make a positive contribution every day to keeping the environment safe – but we know we can do more.

What environmental stewardship means to us



The careful and responsible management of our assets that impact water courses in the North West



Being seen by customers and stakeholders as trustworthy so they are confident in what we do



Seeking to improve water quality with our effluents from wastewater treatment where possible



Always acting quickly when things go wrong, responding appropriately and working to mitigate any damage caused so there are no lasting effects



Reporting transparently on our performance



Delivering on the commitments set out in this Pollution Incident Reduction Plan

Our targets

We have set ourselves stretching targets for AMP8 in addition to the expectations of the Environment Agency (EA). We set out the EA's expectations in section 02 and have reported below how we're doing against them. Currently, for AMP8, we are clear on the 2025 expectations which have been agreed in the form of Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA) targets, and we are fully focused on performing strongly against these metrics.

2025 Environmental Performance Assessment (v12) targets

	Green	Amber	Red
Total pollution incidents per 10,000km sewer length	<=19	>19 and <35	>=35
Total pollution incidents	<=150	>=151 and <=266	>=267
Serious pollution	<=1	2 or 3	>=4
Self-reporting of pollution incidents	>=80% overall and >=90% PS & WwTW	<80% and >65%	<=65%

PS: Pumping Stations

WwTW: Wastewater Treatment Works

We await further guidance on EPA targets for the remainder of AMP8.





Our ambition for AMP8

Controlling the controllable, increasing asset resilience, optimising our systems

We know we have lots to do to get our pollution performance back to industry leading and we are confident we have the right plan. We are determined to make AMP8 our best period of performance. Our PIRP clearly demonstrates we know what we need to do, and our £3 billion investment plan will allow us to accelerate towards achieving the improvements we've committed to. We've already started by making some significant structural changes that will set us up for success:

- ✓ We've split our region into five counties to drive local ownership and accountability, place-based planning and local knowledge and insight on the key issues.
- ✓ We've introduced a new desk-based team as a single point of contact for all potential pollution incidents. This offers expert 24/7 support for our operational teams, the EA and our customers.
- ✓ Rolled out mitigation vehicles and kits to support our operational teams to take action and deploy various pollution avoidance methods where appropriate.
- ✓ We have a dedicated Operational Intelligence team, which is trailblazing innovative ideas and concepts to transform how we operate and how we use AI to support us to advance at pace.

And there's more to come. We're constantly looking at ways we can reinvent ourselves and achieve more and go faster. Pollution reduction is a key priority for us.

What success looks like:

Blockage, flooding, spills and pollution reduction

Reduction in reactive work and increase in proactive work

Improved sensor operability across existing fleet

Established systemised approach to investigations, root cause and investment prioritisation

Digitally enable our system to prevent asset failures

Deliver asset resilience through planning, response and recovery

Apply data-driven and root cause approach to prioritise programmes effectively

Optimise our assets to maximise value for our customers and improve the environment

We are determined to make AMP8 our best period of performance. Our PIRP clearly demonstrates we know what we need to do, and our £3 billion investment plan will allow us to accelerate towards achieving the improvements we've committed to.



Our pollution reduction strategy

We learnt a lot in AMP7 and are busy using our learnings to evolve a bigger and better pollution improvement plan than ever before. We have some ‘big bets’ we are confident will support us to drive tangible reductions in the number of incidents we have seen:

- ✓ Executing our power resilience programme with pace – significant reduction expected in the 30% of power-related pollution incidents.
- ✓ Installing and using intelligence from monitors, alarms and sensors across our entire asset base to help up identify potential issues early.
- ✓ Exploring how we can with confidence use artificial intelligence to predict issues, risk and failures so we can mitigate and prevent pollution incidents.

Our 16 current Pollution Incident Reduction plan (PIRP) initiatives and interventions are listed in the table on pages 30 to 31. We have set out the timescales involved and will be building on this throughout AMP8 publishing an update annually going forward. We will also update on the effectiveness of our plans and be transparent in sharing anything we are testing and trialling.

Pollution reduction strategy		
County-based reduction plans	Centrally-led interventions	Leverage Operational Intelligence
Place-based plans created and owned by county operational teams with local knowledge and experience to drive maximum benefit in key focus areas. These plans inform our investment plans to ensure we are spending money wisely.	Interventions such as our ambitious power resilience programme and dynamic monitoring and sensor programmes will be coordinated and delivered by central teams, who will keep the local operational teams informed on the improvements which will benefit local teams.	Providing tools and technology for generation of insight to county teams driving pollution benefits. Use of situational awareness, real-time data and analytics to optimise our ability to ‘Prevent, Detect, Respond, Investigate and Report’.



Our current action plan

The table below sets out our current 16 key projects across each of the four areas of our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan. These projects will be externally audited once they are complete to ensure we have delivered on them fully for our customers and the environment.

Project number	Project name	Theme	Outcome	Timescale
1	Resilience to mains power failures	Prevent	Sites at high risk of having pollution incidents due to mains power failures or power dips have interventions and mitigation put in place to make them more resilient.	Jan 2026
2	Misconnections	Prevent	Fewer private misconnections will reduce wastewater which should be treated going into surface water drains and causing pollution incidents.	Mar 2026
3	Customer campaigns	Prevent	Customers will be better informed about pollution incidents and how to prevent them by only flushing the 3 Ps (Pee, Poo and toilet Paper) and not disposing of cooking fats, oils and grease down the drains.	Mar 2026
4	Maintenance Excellence approach for repeat sites	Prevent	Preventative Maintenance compliance improvements will be targeted based on pollution avoidance benefit. Precision Maintenance Asset Health checks, Bad Actors and Defect Elimination reviews, and the identification of any critical spares.	Mar 2026
5	Last in Line (LiL) site surveys and optimisation	Prevent	LiL survey programme prioritised based on pollution risk across the region. LiLs will be surveyed to determine current system performance, capture any missing data and raise any appropriate remedial works required.	Mar 2026
6	DNM Point Programme	Prevent	Install monitoring solutions to support the business achieve pollution reduction. This makes use of the existing DNM analytics in place and requires only device installation, onboarding and data. Looking to enhance monitoring solutions at identified high-risk wastewater pumping stations.	Mar 2026
7	DNM Linear Programme	Prevent	Continuation of programme to support the business reduce pollution incidents by installing monitors for known pollution risk hotspots.	Mar 2026
8	Network Cleansing Programme	Prevent	We will be proactively cleansing our wastewater sewer network to remove blockages before they cause an impact to customers or the environment.	Mar 2026



Our current action plan

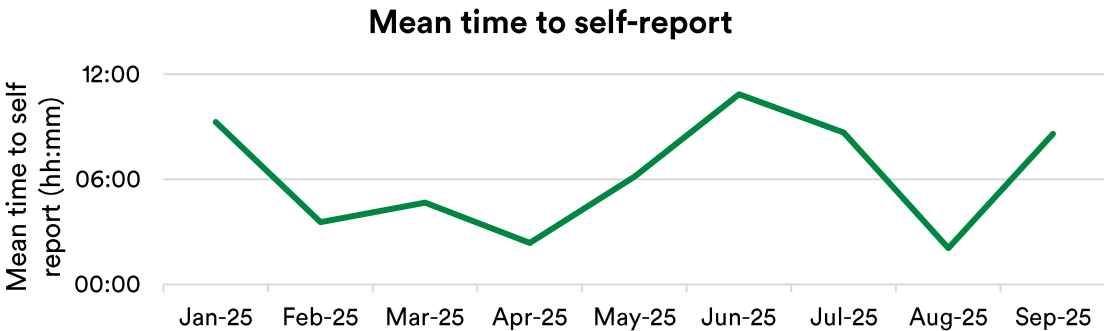
Project number	Project name	Theme	Outcome	Timescale
9	Water main rehab programme	Prevent	We will be replacing and upgrading our highest-risk water mains.	Mar 2026
10	Water main pressure reduction programme	Prevent	We have a strategy to review pressures across our water network to reduce the risk of mains bursts and leaks.	Mar 2026
11	Mitigation kits	Respond	Roll out the use of mitigation kits across the hubs in all counties for use in response to mitigate the impact of any pollution.	Dec 2025
12	Zero repeat pollution incidents	Respond	When pollution incidents do occur, making sure we have processes in place to investigate and prevent the same thing happening again in the same place.	BAU
13	External expert water quality assessments	Respond	When pollution incidents occur which could be serious, making sure we have external experts available to support in our investigations, so the true environmental impact is understood – enabling us to better respond.	BAU
14	Wastewater role-specific pollution training	Investigate and report	Training which is specific to the person and their role in pollution prevention, detection, response, investigation or reporting.	Jan 2026
15	Water pollution training	Investigate and report	New pollution training designed for water operation teams to help them understand their role in protecting the environment; in pollution prevention, detection, response, investigation or reporting.	Mar 2026
16	Data Literacy Academy training	Investigate and report	We have partnered with Data Literacy Academy to empower our people with data skills to drive faster, smarter interventions and processes.	Mar 2026

Environmental Events Management Desk (EEM)

In April 2025, we introduced the Environmental Events Management Desk as a single point of contact for all potential pollution incidents. This team of people are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. They have a clear objective – to take overall responsibility for overseeing and triaging potential incidents reported as pollution incidents, taking appropriate action to mitigate the situation whilst reporting transparently and escalating where necessary.

The benefits we’re seeing so far:

- ✓ 14 pollution incidents have been avoided due to this intervention
- ✓ Better-quality real-time information to support post-incident investigations
- ✓ Positive feedback from stakeholders
- ✓ Improved self-reporting performance





Asset health improvements and investments

We know how important our asset health and reliability is to preventing pollution incidents and that's why we're planning to spend £259 million in AMP8 and move to a full proactive maintenance strategy. This is critical in transforming our approach to maintenance and we're proud to be the first water company to have secured ISO 550001 Asset Management standards.

Maintenance transformation

People, training and support



- Lead a cultural shift from reactive to proactive maintenance
- Raise awareness of maintenance reliability best practice
- Define and deliver a new corrective maintenance end-to-end process
- Capture the right data for analysis and continuous improvement
- Provide user-friendly mobile solutions for field teams

Planning and scheduling

The people, the tools and the time to get the job done



- Identify parts, skills and resources needed in advance of work (Maintenance Planner role)
- Create weekly schedule of executable work
- Make way for more spanner time
- Allow protected time for preventative and predictive work (Schedulers)
- Reduce waste and non-productive time

Asset health and reliability

Understanding the health of our assets



- Invest in predictive technology including vibration, thermography and laser alignment to predict asset failures
- Lubrication service to routinely lubricate assets based on condition
- Asset reliability analytics to give a detailed picture of asset health
- Intervene on assets at the optimal point before functional failure

Sourcing and inventory

Parts and services when and where we need them



- Central and local stores to support planning and scheduling by making parts easily accessible
- Hold spares only when it can remove operational risk and lead times
- Real-time visibility of stock
- Manage refurbishment work via Maintenance Sourcing team
- Support our engineers in returning assets back to service as quickly as possible
- Ensure compliance with the Utilities Contract Regulations 2016

Metrics, performance and analysis

Using our data to improve performance



- Use industry best practice metrics and benchmarks
- Scorecard to measure the performance of operational areas, sites and business averages
- Focus on preventative and predictive compliance; schedule compliance; statutory compliance

Maintenance workbank

Improving asset reliability with preventative work



- Store all preventative and predictive tasks for our asset base
- Prioritise our most critical assets using Failure Mode Effects Analysis (FMEA)
- Refresh all preventative and predictive tasks
- Create a library of detailed job plan instructions to prevent or predict failures

Digital maintenance

The right systems to help it all run smoothly



- Invest in innovative and intuitive technology
- Support data-driven decision making
- Identify opportunities to automate elements of our process
- Gather asset data from multiple sources into a singular asset management platform

Customer campaign 2025 – Change the Cycle

We take our environmental responsibility seriously and we recognise that with our customers' help we can achieve so much more. With this in mind, we continue to look at ways to engage and educate our customers on the things they can do that will help to prevent sewer blockages and flooding.

We started with a simple question – how do women dispose of their period products? To find out, we interviewed more than 1,700 women to understand their habits and beliefs around product disposal. The research revealed that one in four had recently flushed period products, with tampons being the most flushed item. The reason behind this behaviour mostly came down to habit, with over 90% saying it's something they've always done, and nearly half believed the products were flushable.

Using these insights, we shaped our campaign to ensure it will make the biggest impact. The campaign isn't about attributing blame; it's about raising awareness so together we can change the cycle and protect the environment. Through the campaign we're aiming to encourage women to 'wrap it and bin it' – not flush it – and we're reaching customers through ads on TV streaming services, YouTube, social media and toilet door posters in bars and pubs across Liverpool and Manchester.

Watch our **Change the Cycle** campaign video





04 Governance, monitoring and review

We recognise consistent and high standards of governance are integral to the successful delivery of our Pollution Improvement Reduction Plan.



Doing what we say we will

We recognise consistent and high standards of governance are integral to the successful delivery of our Pollution Improvement Reduction Plan (PIRP), and indeed to our credibility as an organisation with a reputation of doing what we say we will. Our board is committed to overseeing and ensuring this plan is delivered in line with commitments made, on time and in a transparent and quality way.

We take this so seriously that we are currently expanding our levels of assurance, bolstering how we currently operate with a dedicated risk and assurance team who will help hold us to account in this space.

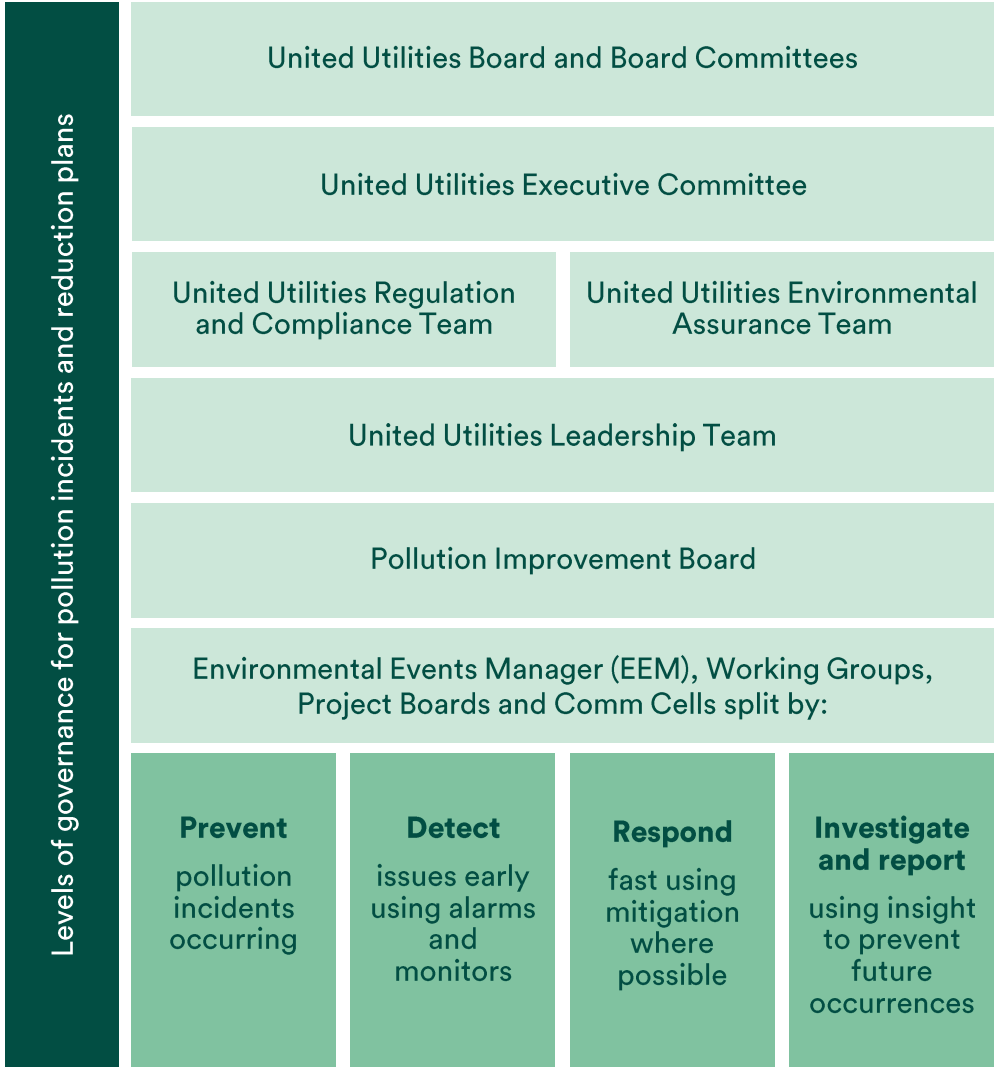
The board will continue to regularly review performance against our objectives and where necessary will drive levels of responsibility and accountability appropriately throughout the leadership team.

This PIRP has been developed to cover actions to mitigate the risk of pollution incidents impacting the water environment based on a thorough understanding of the root causes of such incidents. The operational directors accountable for delivery of actions have confirmed they are deliverable, and the plan has been signed off by our board.

Progress will be tracked at several levels in the organisation, including at the executive level through monthly reports on pollution incident performance and progress updates on the planned actions at least quarterly.

The plan will also be reviewed quarterly with the Environment Agency (EA) to transparently and collaboratively discuss progress and ensure we are aligned. Each year the plan will be reviewed considering performance and emerging risks; which will support each new annual plan and publication.

To give confidence that we are delivering against the plan, we will obtain independent assurance of action delivery annually. This will be shared in our updates to the plan, which we will ask the board to sign off.





Governance, monitoring and review routine

To ensure this plan is maintained, transparent to customers and stakeholders, and delivery focused, we are committing to a level of internal governance, external assurance and EA review and sign-off.

Level	Frequency	Detail
Pollution Board	Weekly	All category 1-3 pollution incidents and those that are not self-reported have a root cause investigation before being presented to a panel of peers and subject matter experts to ensure learnings are taken to prevent the same incidents happening in future. The Wastewater Treatment Director and senior leadership team review performance to identify areas where interventions are required.
Pollution improvement delivery group	Twice weekly	Review of pollution performance and progress of PIRP actions. Track project delivery against plan and manage any risks to timescales, quality or cost.
Pollution steering group board	Quarterly	Report on progress against plan and manage any escalations from Pollution Improvement Group.
United Utilities executive	Quarterly	Review of pollution performance and progress of PIRP actions.
Environment Agency/ United Utilities review of progress	Quarterly	Updates through United Utilities/Environment Agency Performance Management Group with escalation routes available to Strategic Liaison Group if necessary.
United Utilities board	Annually	Sign off of Pollution Incident Reduction Plans and annual update on delivery.
External audit of plan	Annually	Validation and assurance that the plan is being delivered as set out in this document.
Environmental AGM	Annually	Update on our plan and engage third-party input for collaborative working.



05 Find out more

Find out more about our environmental improvement plans and other work we're doing across the company.

[Reducing pollution](#)[Improving the North West's rivers](#)[How to report a pollution](#)[Our environmental, social and governance approach](#)[Our business plan for 2025–30](#)[What we're doing in your area](#)[Our action plan for Windermere](#)[Windermere: what you can do](#)[Stop the Block: Help us prevent blockages](#)[Understanding misconceptions](#)[How do storm overflows work?](#)



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