

Will you help us to save water?

On behalf of the Environment Agency and Severn Trent, I'm writing to brief you on the outlook for water supplies over the summer and to ask for your help to ensure we can meet demand at what is a particularly sensitive time.

We know Local Resilience Forums have a crucial role to play in managing incidents. We also know LRF members are community leaders in their own right who help set the tone for what happens locally.

Demand for water in the Midlands has increased sharply as a direct consequence of the CV-19 emergency, combined with an exceptionally dry spring. We've seen spikes in usage of up to 40 per cent in some cases.

If the long-range weather forecasts are accurate, we'll have enough water for the summer, despite the exceptional conditions. But the margin of comfort is small and we're therefore taking additional steps to ensure safe, reliable supplies of water for the whole community.

The first thing we're doing is increasing the amount of water we can treat and put into supply. We've recently built the capability to provide an extra 50 million litres a day, and will increase this by a further 50 million litres a day in the coming months.

The second thing we're doing is trying to reduce demand to more normal levels. Specific measures include:

- A comprehensive customer education programme guided by insights from behavioural psychologists;
- The offer to make million pound payments to charities in exchange for customers saving water; and
- Working with large water users, such as industry, to reduce their demand while maintaining their ability to operate effectively. We've been very encouraged by the positive response we have received.

However, as Sir James Bevan, Chair of the Environment Agency, noted: "It is not just the job of the government or the Environment Agency, or the water companies to fix this problem."

We're therefore looking for your help

We don't want to distract from the essential work you do, but three simple acts will make a big difference to managing demand. We would specifically ask LRF members:

1. To not use hoses to water gardens, municipal parks and other outside areas on days when the temperature rises above 22°;
2. To not wash vehicles more than once a month between now and September (except for reasons of essential hygiene); and
3. To help spread the message by inform employees why these measures are necessary and encourage others to be more water conscious.

You can find some really **simple tips about water saving** you can share with your teams at <https://www.stwater.co.uk/wonderful-on-tap/save-water/you-can-make-a-difference/> and they can pick up some **free water saving devices** at <https://www.stwater.co.uk/wonderful-on-tap/save-water/free-ways-to-save/>.

Our basic message is simple: there is sufficient water for everyone if we all do our bit by minimising the use of water hungry gadgets like sprinklers and pressure washers.

We are grateful for your help.

Kind regards



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CEO, Severn Trent



Mike Grimes

Area Director, Environment Agency