



BRISTOL
WATER



Pollution Incident
Reduction Plan 2026

Customer Summary

Protecting our environment – a shared commitment

Our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) sets out the decisive and transparent actions we are taking to reduce pollution incidents across our water network and protect the environment. This plan is shaped by feedback from customers, stakeholders and local communities.

Why this plan matters

Customers across our supply area rely on us to provide safe, high-quality drinking water every day. We know how important it is to care for local rivers and chalk streams, manage water responsibly in a water-stressed region, and reduce the risk of pollution from our clean water network. At the same time, the standards we are set by our regulators, Ofwat and the Environment Agency, continue to rise.

We have listened – we are investing in our assets, improving resilience and working closely with communities to protect the environment and support sustainable water use.

This plan sets out what comes next, as we deliver the improvements you want and meet the higher standards set. Each year we will report on our progress and show how our progress compares with our plan.



Our region at a glance

Reducing pollution incidents starts with understanding the scale, complexity and environmental sensitivity of the region we serve. Our operational footprint spans multiple catchments and communities – each presenting different risks and opportunities for improvement.

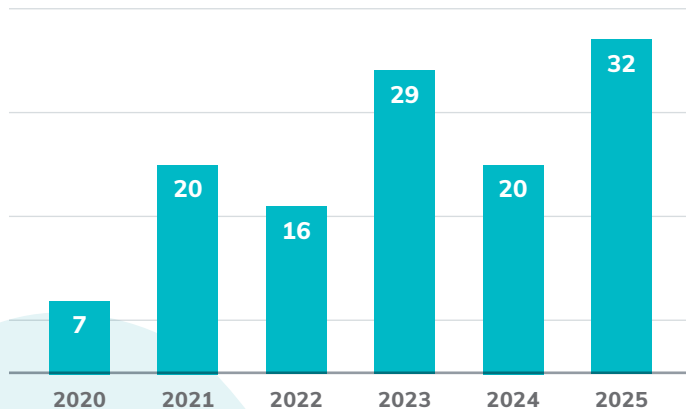
- We supply around **280 million litres** of water every day to **1.3 million people** and **33,000 businesses**. Resilience and a rapid incident response is essential to protect customers and the environment.
- Our **2,400km² supply area** includes environmentally sensitive landscapes, where preventing pollution is critical .
- With **17 water treatment works, three major reservoirs**, boreholes and raw water storage, we manage a complex system where asset condition and operational discipline impacts pollution risk.
- Our network – **6,980 kilometres** of mains, **113 service reservoirs**, **111 potable water pumping stations** and **15 raw water stations** – requires proactive maintenance, monitoring and early intervention to avoid issues.
- Because **85% of our water comes from surface sources**, primarily the Mendip reservoir and Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, catchment management and upstream pollution prevention are central to improving water quality.



Our current performance

Pollution can occur when burst water mains or equipment failures at treatment works result in sediment or small chemical releases into watercourses. Each year our performance is assessed by Ofwat and the Environment Agency, who measure pollution incidents, asset compliance and the resilience of our water system. We are focused on preventing pollution and continue to monitor our performance alongside the rest of the sector.

The chart below displays Bristol Water pollutions (Category 1 to 3) per year from 2020 to 2025.



* Data is not yet available for the WASC water average for 2025 YTD.
** Only water and sewerage companies considered.

In 2025 we recorded a relatively low number of minor pollution incidents, with 89% identified and reported by our own teams, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and swift action. We also achieved 100% compliance with environmental permits at our treatment works. Serious incidents remain rare, with one significant event at a treatment works – well below the industry average year on year.

We know there is more to do, and we are strengthening our systems, investing in our assets, and improving training to continue reducing risk and protecting the natural environment.

Our progress at a glance

- **Strong performance on serious incidents** – one serious pollution incident in 2025, maintaining a track record consistently better than the sector average.
- **Low number of minor pollution events** – 31 minor pollution events (Category 3) were recorded, most linked to ageing pipes during an exceptionally dry summer, and our teams responded quickly to limit environmental impact.
- **91% of pollutions self-reported to regulators by our own teams** – our high rate of self-reporting shows strong governance, transparency, and a proactive approach to environmental protection.
- **90% environmental permit compliance** – all our discharge permits were fully compliant, reflecting strong controls at treatment works and robust site monitoring.

In the year ahead we will keep building on this progress, investing in new technology, and working with our partners to ensure cleaner water, a healthier environment, and a better future for all.

Understanding pollution

The basics and how we are working with you to protect our region

Pollution incidents can happen when clean water escapes from our network and affects the surrounding environment. This can occur, for example, if a water main bursts and causes soil, sediment or chlorine treated water to enter nearby streams or land.

In our region, wastewater services are provided by a different company, but we remain fully responsible for preventing and reporting any pollution incidents that arise from the clean water assets we operate.

Pollution can be caused by a range of factors on the clean water network, including:

- Bursts or leaks on water mains can release chlorinated water or sediment into the environment
- Operational issues during repair or maintenance work, or accidental damage to pipes – such as during third-party construction – can also lead to releases of chlorinated water or sediment
- Structural failures at pumping stations or treatment sites can result in small chemical releases.

Environmental conditions such as ground movement or extreme weather can increase pressure on buried pipes. Our responsibility is to manage and maintain the network to reduce the risk of incidents.

Pollution reporting

From 2026, pollution incident categories are being expanded and redefined, meaning a wider range of events must be reported than before. This change brings more types of events into scope. As a result, the total number of incidents we report will increase, reflecting the new definitions rather than changes in how the network is performing.

Working towards better pollution reduction

We have a clear, long term plan to drive down pollution incidents and protect the environment. We are:

- Prioritising highest-risk assets by targeting upgrades, maintenance and monitoring in the parts of the network and treatment works most likely to cause pollution.
- Enhancing digital monitoring and early-warning systems to detect potential failures sooner and intervene before an incident occurs.
- Strengthening frontline incident response, improving equipment, processes and cross-team learning to reduce environmental impact and avoid repeat events.
- Investing in proactive maintenance and infrastructure renewal, including pipe replacement, pressure management, chemical-control upgrades and rigorous site audits.
- Building a stronger environmental culture, with expanded training, a new Clean, Green, Safe programme, and a dedicated training centre to improve staff skills and prevent pollution.

For a full breakdown of the measures we are taking, please see our [PIRP webpage](#).





Stay informed

We're committed to keeping you in the loop. We'll share regular updates on progress against our plan on our [PIRP webpage](#).

We are investing in improvements across the clean water network, including:

- Major upgrades at water treatment works
- Targeted replacement and rehabilitation of water mains
- Targeted upgrades following site "MOT" surveys
- Investment in digital monitoring, systems and data
- Training and cultural investment through "Clean, Green, Safe"
- Improving pumping station resilience
- Increasing real time monitoring and data insight
- Reviewing and updating permits for clean water discharges
- Enhancing reservoir scour valve testing controls.

This work helps reduce the likelihood of bursts, chemical releases, and unauthorised discharges.

Our response to pollution events

Our teams use real-time monitoring and alarms to spot problems fast, triage incidents, and get on site quickly. The highest priority alarms are triaged within 15 minutes of receipt and frontline teams are dispatched and target site attendance within 2 hours.

What you can do to help

Customers can play an important role in protecting local rivers and streams by:

- Reporting leaks or bursts as soon as you spot them
- Using water efficiently, helping reduce pressure on the network in a water-stressed region
- Reporting unusual river discolouration or changes in flow, which can help us identify issues quickly
- And whilst we don't manage wastewater services in our region, checking for plumbing misconnections is important, because a misconnected pipe can send wastewater to the wrong drain and into the environment.

Real-world impact

Case study

New training centre at Pynes Water Treatment Works

Why this work matters

Reliable services depend on teams with the right skills, tools and culture – because how people spot issues, respond on the ground and make decisions every day has a direct impact on preventing pollution. Investing in training is one of the most effective ways we can protect water quality, strengthen operational resilience and keep customers safe.

What we are doing

Bristol Water is part of the wider Pennon Group, and has access to the state-of-the-art training centre located at Pynes Water Treatment Works in Exeter. This exceptional facility provides a realistic, hands-on environment where our people can learn how the network operates and how to look after it safely.

The centre includes a full training rig that shows how changes in water pressure can affect the system. It helps staff learn the safest ways to operate valves and equipment so they can protect customers and prevent problems before they happen.

Progress to date

We also use the facility to train our contractors and partners, helping everyone who works on our network follow the same high standards.

The courses cover key topics such as:

- How drinking water is treated and moved around the network
- How to operate equipment to safety and to avoid pollution
- How to manage water pressure
- How to use monitoring tools to keep water quality high.



This investment is helping us protect our network, support our teams, and continue delivering clean, safe water to homes and businesses across the region.



Case study

Service reservoir discharge compliance

We are improving how we manage water discharged from our service reservoirs to make sure it fully meets environmental permit requirements.

Why the work matters

Even small traces of chlorine can harm the environment if they enter local watercourses. Ensuring discharged water is properly treated helps protect rivers and wildlife, and gives customers confidence that we are operating responsibly and within our permits.

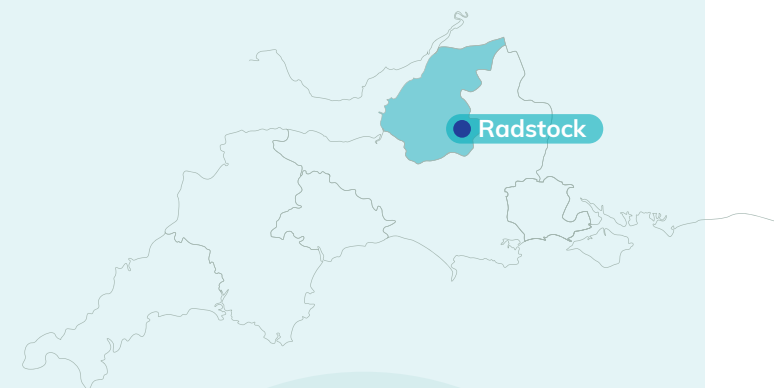
What we are doing

We set up a senior-led compliance task force to oversee work across our sites and reduce the risk of permit exceedances.

For example, at Maesbury service reservoir, a review showed that chlorine was being removed in a way that was not consistently effective. To address this, teams from across the business worked together to design and install a dedicated dechlorination chamber. This new system increases the time the water is treated, which improves the removal of chlorine while also reducing the amount of chemicals needed.

Progress to date

The new dechlorination chamber is now in place and working successfully, providing more reliable chlorine removal and improved permit compliance. We are using this learning to assess other sites and identify where similar improvements could deliver further environmental benefits.



Case study

Improving how we manage network events at Bristol Water

We have strengthened the way Bristol Water manages network events such as leaks and bursts, particularly where there is a risk of water entering local watercourses.



Why the work matters

Leaks and bursts can sometimes lead to discharges that affect rivers and streams. Identifying these risks early, taking action to reduce environmental impact, and reporting openly to regulators is essential for protecting the environment and maintaining trust. This approach also helps us learn from incidents and continually improve how we respond in the future.

What we are doing

We developed a clear procedure for managing discharges, setting out how potential pollution risks should be identified, reported, and managed. The procedure explains the steps teams should take on site to reduce environmental impact and ensure timely self-reporting where required.

The procedure was developed in collaboration with the Environment Agency, ensuring it meets regulatory expectations and supports strong working relationships with local regulators.

We have also standardised how evidence is gathered during an event. When a leak or burst presents a potential risk, our teams collect clear, consistent information – including photographs of the site, samples of the impacted watercourse, details of mitigation actions taken to contain pollution, and an assessment of any environmental impact. This information is shared with the Environment Agency as part of event feedback, clearly explaining what happened, how impacts were reduced, and what actions were taken to prevent recurrence.

Progress to date

Our teams now collect consistent evidence during incidents, which has improved reporting, strengthened environmental awareness across our field teams, and helped Bristol Water consistently meet national self-reporting expectations. We have also improved repair practices to reduce repeat issues and minimise future environmental impact.

Case study

Increasing controls at Littleton Water Treatment Works

We have remote monitoring in place across our treatment works with data outputs collated centrally and presented on dashboards.

These dashboards provide a comprehensive view of various parameters and enable corrective actions to be taken before an issue occurs.

Why the work matters

Water treatment works release small amounts of water back into the environment from different parts of the treatment process, such as the water used to clean filters.

Protecting the environment is a core part of what we do, so there are strict limits on how much can be released.

We work to spot potential issues early, before they become a problem, to reduce the risk of breaching these limits – and to make sure our treatment works continue to run safely and responsibly for customers and the local environment.

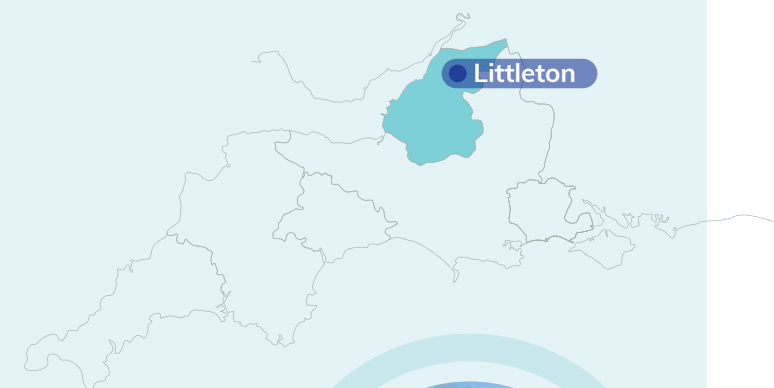
What we are doing

Littleton Water Treatment Works is part of our wider remote monitoring network, where performance data from across our treatment works is collected centrally and displayed on live dashboards. These dashboards highlight trends and potential risks, allowing teams to take preventative action.

At Littleton, this data showed that on some occasions the site was approaching its daily discharge limit. In response, we reviewed how the pumps were operating and invested in an upgrade to the control system. This improvement increases on-site monitoring and enables pumps to automatically stop before the daily volume limit is reached.

Progress to date

The upgraded controls are now in place, providing greater oversight and automation at the site. This means Littleton Water Treatment Works can proactively manage discharge volumes, helping to maintain permit compliance and deliver better environmental protection for the long term.



Working together for a cleaner future

Our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan is a living document, updated regularly as we deliver on our commitments and respond to new challenges. By working together with customers, communities, regulators, and partners, we can achieve a cleaner, healthier Bristol region.

We invite you to join us on this journey. Every action, big or small, helps protect the environment we all value.

For a full breakdown of the measures we are taking, please see our main PIRP documents, which set out all planned actions in more detail.