

SUMMARY

The forecast for August is for a continuation of below normal to exceptionally low flows across England, Wales and north-eastern Scotland, with record lows anticipated for August and drought impacts likely to continue into the autumn. Further north, flows are likely to be normal to below normal, with normal to above normal flows expected in north-west Scotland. Groundwater levels are likely to be normal to below normal over the next three months.

Rainfall:

The lack of rainfall in July was unparalleled. It was the driest July on record for England and Wales, and the driest month ever recorded in South-East England, receiving just 2% of the 1991-2020 average rainfall. Conditions were drier than average across most of the UK with only northwest Scotland experiencing slightly above-average rainfall.

The Met Office UK 3-month Outlook (issued 27th July 2026) indicates an increased likelihood (1.5x chance) of a dry August to October period. The chance of rain and wind related impacts is forecast to increase later in the three-month period. Temperatures are also expected to be above average, with a 2.3x chance of a warm three-month period, particularly during August and early September. Continued warm conditions are likely to increase evaporation, limiting the benefit of rainfall that does occur.

River flows:

River flows declined rapidly across the UK during July, with only catchments in the far north of Scotland remaining above normal. Flows in many catchments fell from normal conditions in June to exceptionally low flows in July, with several record-low flows reported across England and Wales.

August river flows are expected to remain below normal to exceptionally low across England, Wales and north-east Scotland, with a high likelihood of record-low August flows in several catchments. Conditions are expected to be less severe in northern England and southern Scotland where flows are likely to be normal to below normal. In north-west Scotland, flows are expected to remain normal to above normal. Over the next three months, normal to below normal conditions are likely to persist across much of the UK, prolonging ongoing drought impacts and increasing pressure on water resources.

Groundwater:

Groundwater levels continued to decline in July from their June position, showing predominantly normal to notably low levels across the UK, though no records were broken.

In August, groundwater levels are expected to be normal to below normal in the Chalk, and Jurassic limestone aquifers of England, with some notably low levels in the Carboniferous Limestone in south Wales. Levels in the Permo-Triassic sandstones of England and southern Scotland are likely to remain within the normal range. Over the next three months, groundwater levels are likely to stabilise or continue to decline, depending on local hydrogeological conditions.

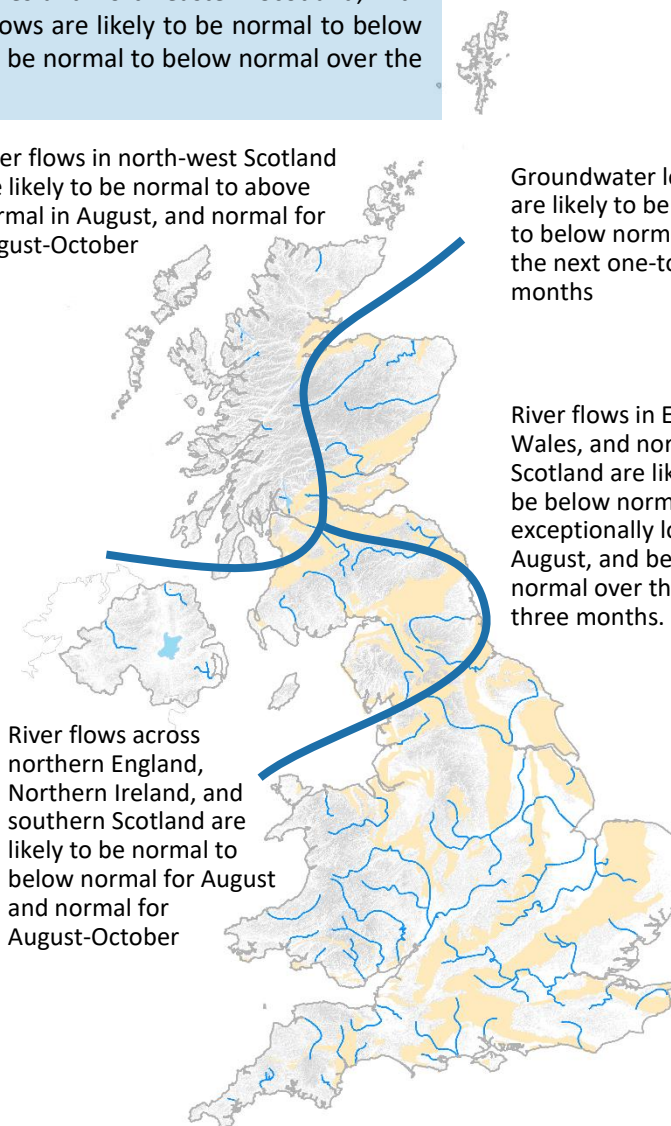
The UK Hydrological Outlook provides an outlook for the water situation for the United Kingdom over the next three months and beyond. For guidance on how to interpret the outlook, a wider range of information, and a full description of underpinning methods, please visit the website: www.hydoutuk.net

River flows in north-west Scotland are likely to be normal to above normal in August, and normal for August-October

Groundwater levels are likely to be normal to below normal over the next one-to-three months

River flows in England, Wales, and north-east Scotland are likely to be below normal to exceptionally low in August, and below normal over the next three months.

River flows across northern England, Northern Ireland, and southern Scotland are likely to be normal to below normal for August and normal for August-October



Shaded areas show principal aquifers

About the UK Hydrological Outlook:

This document presents an outlook for the UK water situation for the next 1-3 months and beyond, using observational datasets, meteorological forecasts and a suite of hydrological modelling tools. The outlook is produced in a collaboration between the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), British Geological Survey (BGS), the Met Office, the Environment Agency (EA), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and for Northern Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure – Rivers (DfIR).

Data and Models:

The UK Hydrological Outlook depends on the active cooperation of many data suppliers. This cooperation is gratefully acknowledged. Historic river flow and groundwater data are sourced from the [UK National River Flow Archive](#) and the [National Groundwater Level Archive](#). Contemporary data are provided by the EA, SEPA, NRW and DfIR. These data are used to initialise hydrological models, and to provide outlook information based on statistical analysis of historical analogues.

Climate forecasts are produced by the Met Office. Hydrological modelling is undertaken by UKCEH using the Grid-to-Grid and GR6J hydrological models. Hydrogeological modelling uses the AquMod model run by BGS. Supporting documentation is available from the Outlooks website: <https://hydoutuk.net/about/methods>

Presentation:

The language used in the summary presented overleaf generally places flows and groundwater levels into just three classes, i.e. below normal, normal, and above normal. However, the underpinning methods use as many as seven classes as defined in the graphic to the right, i.e. the summary uses a simpler classification than some of the methods. On those occasions when it is appropriate to provide greater discrimination at the extremes the terminology and definitions of the seven class scheme will be adopted.

Percentile range of historic values for relevant month	
Exceptionally high flow	> 95
Notably high flow	87-95
Above normal	72-87
Normal range	28-72
Below normal	13-28
Notably low flow	5-13
Exceptionally low flow	< 5

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Further information:

For more detailed information about the UK Hydrological Outlook, and the derivation of the maps, plots and interpretation provided in this outlook, please visit the UK Hydrological Outlook website. The website features a host of other background information, including a wider range of sources of information which are used in the preparation of this Outlook. Dynamic access to many of the outputs of the UK Hydrological Portal are available on the [UK Hydrological Outlooks Portal](#).

Contact:

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Reference for the UK Hydrological Outlook:

UK Hydrological Outlook, 10 August 2026, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Oxfordshire UK, Online, <https://www.hydoutuk.net/latest-outlook/>

Other Sources of Information:

The UK Hydrological Outlook should be used alongside other sources of up-to-date information on the current water resources status and flood risk.

Environment Agency Water Situation Reports: provides summary of water resources status on a monthly and weekly basis for England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/water-situation-reports-for-england>

Flood warnings are continually updated, and should be consulted for an up-to-date and localised assessment of flood risk:

- Environment Agency: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/map>
- Natural Resources Wales: <https://flood-warning.naturalresources.wales/>
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding.aspx>

Hydrological Summary for the UK: provides summary of current water resources status for the UK: <https://nrfa.ceh.ac.uk/monthly-hydrological-summary-uk>

UK Met Office forecasts for the UK: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>

UK Water Resources Portal: monitor the UK hydrological situation in near real-time including rainfall, river flow, groundwater and soil moisture from COSMOS-UK: <https://eip.ceh.ac.uk/hydrology/water-resources/>