

SUMMARY Low river flows have persisted in England following a dry September. The rainfall forecast for October is balanced, meaning that flows are likely to remain below normal in most areas. Above normal flows are expected in parts of western Scotland, Northern Ireland and the northwest of England. Over the next three months, the forecast is for above normal rainfall, suggesting that river flows in many parts are likely to recover to their normal to above normal ranges. Low flows are likely to persist in the groundwater-fed catchments in the southeast of England as groundwater levels slowly rise but remain low.

Rainfall:

September's rainfall was below average in many areas, with almost all of England experiencing less than 70% of their average rainfall, and parts of eastern England receiving less than 30%. Western Scotland, Northern Ireland and parts of South-West Wales received above average rainfall. The forecast (issued by the Met Office on 28.09.2026) indicates October is likely to be warm, but the likelihoods of wet or dry conditions are evenly balanced, with near-normal conditions most probable. The three-month forecast is for a mild but wet October-December, with twice the normal likelihood of a wet start to winter.

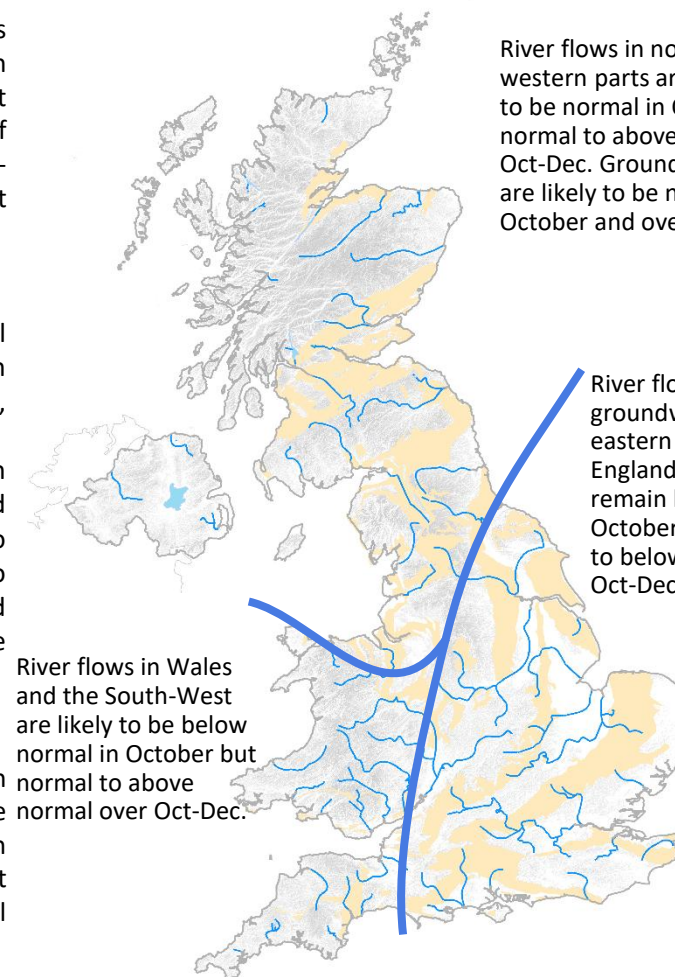
River flows:

Low river flows persisted in much of England and Wales throughout September, with the low rainfall continuing the pattern of previous months. Exceptionally low flows continued in much of southern England, with the Tone recording a new September low. However, flows in north-west England, Northern Ireland and southern Scotland were normal, and those in western Scotland above normal. The outlook for October is that flows are likely to remain below normal across Wales and southern and eastern England but elsewhere flows are likely to be in their normal range. Over the period October-December the forecast for higher rainfall suggests that more responsive areas are likely to see increasing flows. Rivers in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, and southwest England are likely to be in the normal to above normal range. However, in the slower-responding groundwater-fed catchments of southeastern England flows are likely to remain below normal for the next three months.

Groundwater:

Groundwater levels at the end of September remain low across many sites in England, especially in south Wales and southern England. Levels at sites in southern Scotland and north-west England are mostly normal. The outlook indicates that groundwater levels are likely to remain below normal in October, with some sites in southern and eastern areas notably or exceptionally low. Over the next three months, levels at most sites are expected to recover to their normal range, but below normal levels are likely to persist in several of the principal aquifers.

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 northern and western parts are expected to be normal in October and normal to above normal in Oct-Dec. Groundwater levels are likely to be normal in October and over Oct-Dec.

River flows and groundwater levels in eastern and southern England are likely to remain below normal in October and be normal to below normal over Oct-Dec.

River flows in Wales and the South-West are likely to be below normal in October but normal to above normal over Oct-Dec.

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](#).

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Reference for the UK Hydrological Outlook:

UK Hydrological Outlook, 08 October 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/>