UK Hydrological Outlook

UKCEH

Period: From November 2026

Issued on 10.11.2026 using data to the end of October 2026

SUMMARY: October rainfall was generally average or above average across the UK. Forecasts favour wetter-than-average conditions for November to January, increasing the chances of a recovery in river flows in many responsive catchments. In November, flows are expected to be normal to above normal across much of northern and western Britain. However, the effects of recent dry conditions are likely to persist in groundwater-fed catchments, with river flows and groundwater levels in southern and eastern England remaining below normal through the November to January period.

Rainfall:

October rainfall was average or above average across much of the UK. Parts of north-west Scotland and north-west England received more than 150% of average October rainfall, while parts of eastern Scotland and the Welsh Borders were drier than average. The forecast (issued by the Met Office on 26.10.2026) indicates an increased likelihood of above-average rainfall during November. For November to January, there is around twice the normal likelihood of wet conditions, although overall near-average or dry conditions still remain more likely. Since the forecast was issued, there has been an early Sudden Stratospheric Warming event, which could act to temper the chances of a wet early winter.

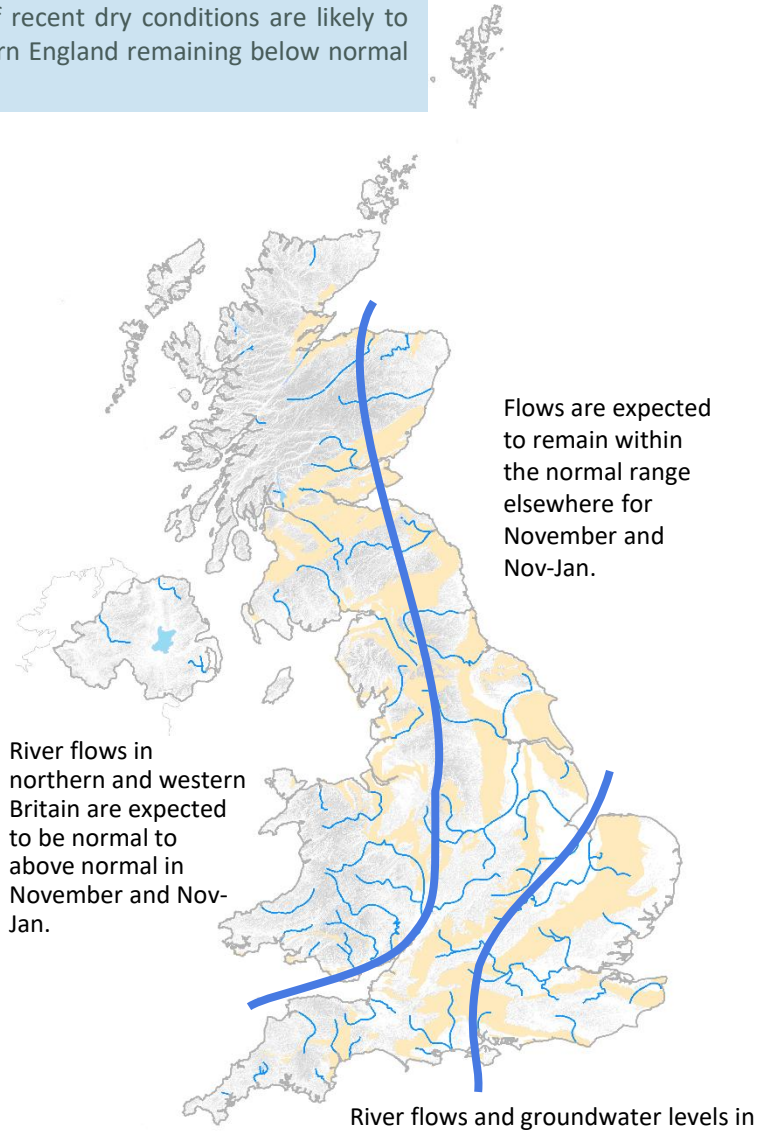
River flows:

Low river flows persisted across much of England during October, although more sites were in the normal range than in previous months. Notably low flows continued in parts of East Anglia and the Thames catchment. Elsewhere, flows were generally in the normal range, although rivers in north-west Scotland and Northern Ireland were above normal. During November, flows are likely to be normal to above normal across Northern Ireland and northern and western Britain. In contrast, flows in south-east England are likely to remain normal to below normal. Elsewhere, flows are likely to remain within the normal range. Over November to January, flows are expected to increase in more responsive catchments, with flows across much of northern and western Britain likely to be normal to above normal. However, flows in slower-responding groundwater-fed catchments of south-eastern England are expected to remain below normal.

Groundwater:

Levels at the end of October remained low across much of England, particularly in the south and east. During November, levels are likely to remain normal to below normal across much of Great Britain, with notably low to exceptionally low levels persisting in parts of southern England and East Anglia. Over November to January, groundwater levels are generally expected to recover towards the normal range. Nevertheless, below-normal levels are likely to persist at some sites in southern and eastern England, particularly in East Anglia.

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



UK HYDROLOGICAL OUTLOOK

November 2026

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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 AquiMod 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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The UK Hydrological Outlook is supported by the Natural Environment Research Council funded NC-UK (NE/Y006208/1) and Hydro-JULES (NE/S017380/1) Programmes.

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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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t: 01491 838800 e: https://hydoutuk.net/contact

Reference for the UK Hydrological Outlook:

UK Hydrological Outlook, 10 November 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:

i. Environment Agency: https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/map
ii. Natural Resources Wales: https://flood-warning.naturalresources.wales/
iii. 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/

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British Geological Survey

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Environment Agency

Met Office

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