

# Water – How much does your business rely on it?

## Water Supply issues

**Abstraction and other changes to river flows are putting pressure on the aquatic environment. In some cases flows are not sufficient to support a healthy ecology.**

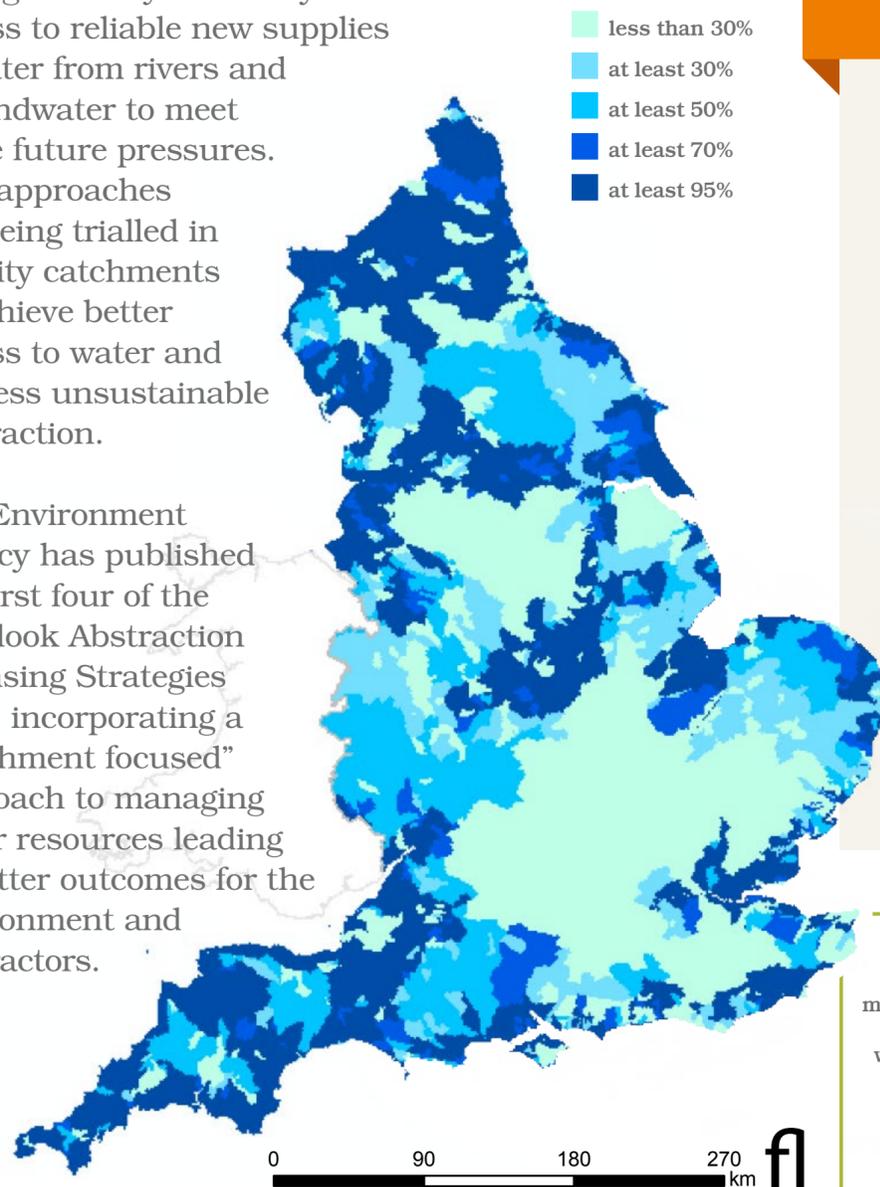
In the future, population growth and development are likely to require more water to be abstracted from our rivers and groundwater sources, and natural water resources are also likely to be affected by a changing climate.

## Abstraction Licences

**Currently there are around 16,900 abstraction licences in England (EA 2020). Not all of the current licences are fully utilised - if they were then there would be serious environmental impacts.**

As Figure 1 shows, large parts of England may not always have access to reliable new supplies of water from rivers and groundwater to meet these future pressures. New approaches are being trialled in priority catchments to achieve better access to water and address unsustainable abstraction.

The Environment Agency has published the first four of the new-look Abstraction Licensing Strategies (ALS) incorporating a “catchment focused” approach to managing water resources leading to better outcomes for the environment and abstractors.



**Figure 1**  
The percentage of time when water is available within catchments in England.

## Abstracting more than 20m<sup>3</sup> a day? Then you need a licence.

*The government has removed some of the previous abstraction licence exemptions on taking water.*

**Trickle irrigation** - which was previously exempt now requires a licence (if taking more than 20m<sup>3</sup> day).

**Cross compliance (GAEC 2)** - irrigators need to hold and comply with their abstraction licence to receive full subsidy, this may include previously exempt irrigators.

## Some solutions to reduce your abstraction volumes and help you to become more drought resilient

- Rainwater harvesting and water storage
- Record and monitor water use to identify where water savings can be made
- Leak detection systems
- Improve soil structure to improve water infiltration and retention
- Use water efficient technology – for example, changing from single nozzle hose-reel to boom spray irrigation equipment
- Irrigating at night to lessen evaporative losses
- Irrigating when wind speeds are low to improve uniformity
- Using a irrigation scheduling system to apply water in a more targeted way

## Further information:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/water-management-abstract-or-impound-water](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/water-management-abstract-or-impound-water)

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/water-situation-reports-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/water-situation-reports-for-england)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-water-abstraction](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-water-abstraction)

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/water-resources/water-resources-priority-catchments/>



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