

Appendix B

Drought Communications Plan

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1. Drought Plan – Communications Plan

Effective communications is an essential part of drought management. The following document is intended to be an overview of the approach the company will take and is not a comprehensive action plan.

The approach is designed to allow flexibility through agile communications to adapt to individual circumstances while ensuring delivery of a consistent message to all necessary audiences. Communications relating to long term planning and water resources are similarly communicated.

This plan is in addition to our “business as usual” communications and advice to customers on water usage and how they can be more water efficient, saving money, energy and protecting the environment. Our business as usual approach includes:

- Use of day to day social media to share themes and stories with our customers e.g. raising awareness of topical issues such as World Environment Day, information regarding incidents, campaigns, company news and community initiatives.
- Using the homepage of our website to share important messages e.g. incident information, how to sign up to our water efficiency campaign “Get Water Fit” and important news stories.
- Emails to customers for targeted communications
- Campaign messaging e.g. summer campaign, “water’s worth saving” WaterUk campaign, high demand campaign etc.
- Roadshow events, wherever possible.

In particular during a drought, we aim to provide up to date, clear concise and where necessary detailed information on requirements for restrictions, for example how and when they will be applied.

The key components considered for the communications plan are:

- Audience
- Channels
- Message
- Frequency and timing
- Monitoring and measures of success

2. Audience – who will we communicate with

As an essential resource, the audiences with an interest in water supply are wide ranging and significant. The following is a list is not fully comprehensive but includes the key audiences. Lists with actual details of each audience will be held and updated by the water company as an ongoing activity.

Audience	
Customers	Household Vulnerable customers and those on our Priority Services Register Businesses Commercial and non-household/business customers (through retailers) Customer Panel and H2Online members MPs/councillors
Regulators	Defra Environment Agency Ofwat Natural England Drinking Water Inspectorate CCW (the consumer watchdog) Water UK Historic England
Other organisations	Neighbouring water companies (e.g. Anglian Water, Affinity Water) Regional groups such as Water Resources East Canal & River Trust Local authorities Local Resilience Forum Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) Fire Service Environmental organisations (including, but not limited to, Wildlife Trust) Other sectors as appropriate
Staff	Employees of Cambridge Water and South Staffordshire PLC Contractors

3. Channels – how we will communicate

We have a wide range of communications channels available to us. These are a mixture of owned, earned and paid for. We already routinely use a number of the channels to communicate with our different audiences – the frequency and timing of these would be altered to respond to the situation. Others are not regularly used and would be adopted to amplify the message being communicated.

The following list is an overview of the categories of channels we would use according to need. We have not listed the individual details of channel as these will be constantly changing.

Customers

- Customer website (www.cambridge-water.co.uk).
- Social media – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn.
- H2Online customer community
- Editorials through traditional print and broadcast media.
- Advertising – print, broadcast, livery, outdoor, and social media.
- SMS/text messaging – using database of customer mobile phone details.
- Email – using database of customer emails.
- Direct customer contact - call centre, on the ground staff (customer liaison), specialist roles/teams (education, water efficiency, catchment management, etc), and mailings e.g. regular billing cycle and bespoke mailings.
- Events and roadshows e.g. using the incident vehicle.

Messages for customers will be both informing them of the current situation, what we are doing and what we may have planned, including likelihood of any restrictions or impacts to customers, as well as water efficiency awareness, advice and messages on how they can make a difference. It will also include consultation and information on water use restrictions as we approach Trigger Levels 2 and 3.

Regulators

Regular liaison meetings are held with our environmental regulators to discuss water resource issues, and the frequency of these will be increased once level 1 is reached. We would attend EA dry weather meetings at this point specifically for drought related issues at the regional scale, and as the situation develops the additional National Drought Group covering all water companies. At these meetings we will exchange information on the situation and the measures that we have in place or are preparing, such as rainfall, water levels, and demand management activities such as leakage.

The Drought Resources Manager will convene the internal drought management team at Trigger Level 1, in addition to a dry weather communications team once the environment stress trigger is reached. The Drought Resources Manager will represent the business at regulator meetings, supported by the wider drought management team and the Drought Strategy Manager, including the Communications Manager.

We will provide Defra regular updates as a drought develops, through the forums above and at regular liaison meetings to include the water resource situation and measures taken to reduce demand and protect reservoir storage levels. We will also provide forward looking expectations including a forecast of when any customer restrictions may be likely when applying our drought triggers against a range of scenarios.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate, Ofwat and CCW will be given regular updates on the drought situation and CCW will be advised of any customer communications. We will work with CCW, the wider industry through networks such as WaterUK, and regional water resources planning groups to ensure consistent messaging and consistent timing of messaging to customers wherever this is possible.

Information on the implementation of water-use restrictions will be shared in advance with the Environment Agency and CCW, to ensure their feedback is taken into account in the preparatory stages. We aim to advise all stakeholders of any specific drought permits/orders with as much notice as possible, using all available communication themes.

The communications with regulators will include situation reports and updates of information to inform the regional position and cross sector co-ordination, and provide awareness of upcoming plans. We will provide forecasts, details on measures in place or planned, our level of communications and types of activity.

Other water companies and retailers

Wholesalers: Regular liaison will take place with other wholesale water providers, particularly in respect of bulk supply arrangements and potential variations or opportunities during a drought. The same applies to neighbouring water companies' operational teams' also regional engagement with them through Water Resources East. We aim to provide a consistent message from all companies in the region and this may include collective or joint campaigns. This is particularly the case in the event of water-use restrictions being implemented, including customer consultation so that households receive a consistent message. We will also co-ordinate our communications to wholesalers in line with any Water UK initiatives. An example of our commitment to aligning messages regionally with stakeholders in the WRE group is set out in Appendix D which details the consistent TUB messaging agreed by all companies within WRE.

NAVs: We will contact NAVs in our area and aim to co-ordinate any restrictions that we impose, so that the approach is consistent, in the same manner as Wholesalers above.

Non-household retailers: Our wholesale team will share regular information on the dry weather and water resources situation and provide water-efficiency advice which the retailers can provide to their customers. We will ask retailers to share messages from our website and social media to increase reach and visibility. This is particularly the case in the event of water-use restrictions being implemented, including customer consultation so that households receive a consistent message. This interface will be managed through our Head of Retail Market role.

Work is already ongoing with our retailers to share water efficiency advice and opportunities. We have

held sessions with several retailers sharing our own work on water efficiency, how this could be supported by the retailers and how we can work together to support businesses with their water efficiency awareness and activities. South Staffs Water is part of the Retailer-Wholesaler Group who have developed a working plan to further promote water efficiency for non-householders. We would look to work with this group in a drought situation to enable consistent messaging for retailers. We will also work with retailers should there be any requests for assistance e.g. regarding water restrictions or support for large businesses.

Other organisations

Key stakeholder organisations will be contacted and kept informed on the potential need for drought permit/order applications. We will work with them and ask them to reinforce water-saving messages and, in the case of environmental groups, how it will affect the environment.

We have a number of existing partnerships with stakeholders which can be utilised to provide specific advice on water saving, such as the Cambridge Botanic Gardens, who can provide more expert advice on how customers can be water-efficient in the garden.

4. Messages – what we will communicate

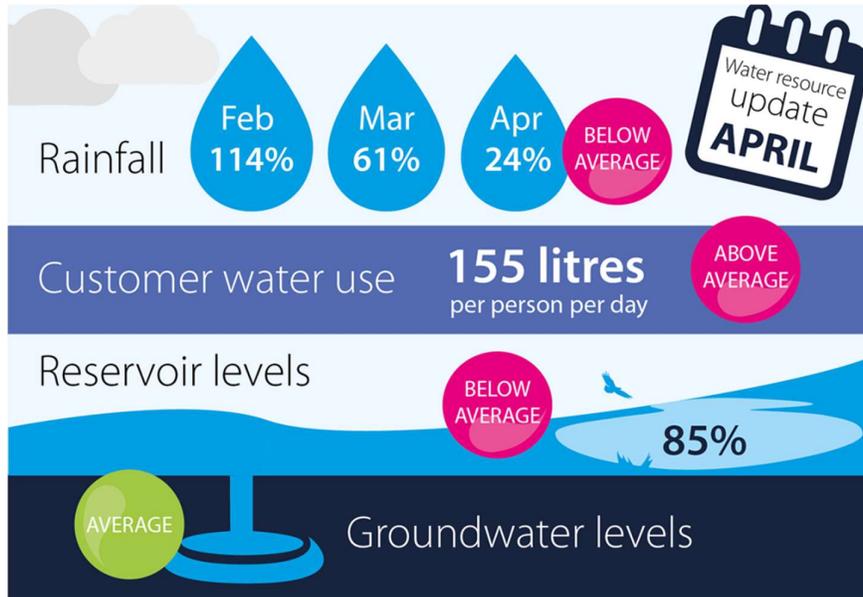
We aim to keep our messages clear, consistent and manageable to ensure maximum understanding and impact with the audience, and we will target messages for specific audiences.

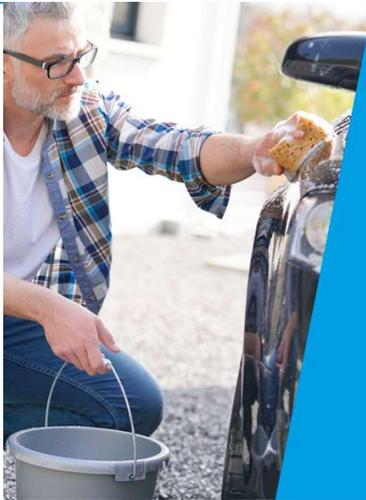
Our messages and level of communications activity will be primarily determined by the status of operations (as triggered by monitoring), tailored as required to the individual audience and channel. As suggested in the Environment Agency’s National Drought Framework, we would also consider joint communications with the Environment Agency and other stakeholders, such as CCW, regional planning groups (WRE) and WaterUK as this could help to re-inforce the messages. It would also ensure that our messages align with those from other organisations. An example of our commitment to aligning messages regionally with stakeholders in the WRE group is given in Appendix D.

Summary of specific communications to audiences

Sector	Key Specific Communications (not exhaustive)
Regulators	Situation reports, water resources outlook, forecasting for restrictions, communications activity summaries, measures in place, leakage levels
Household/Domestic Customers	Water resources situation, likelihood of restrictions, our demand and supply actions (eg. leakage), advice on water efficiency in the home, education on water use of activities, consultation on implementing restrictions, what restrictions will mean, activities restricted and exemptions, what customers can do to help.
Non – Household/Commercial Customers (Retail market)	Water resources situation, likelihood of restrictions, our demand and supply actions (eg. leakage), advice on water savings for business, education on water use of activities, consultation on implementing restrictions, what restrictions will mean, activities restricted and exemptions.
Wholesalers	Water resources outlook, planned customer communications activity, measures in place, opportunities and risks for transfers, alignment of communications and implementation of restrictions.
NAVs	Water resources situation, likelihood of restrictions, our demand and supply actions (eg. leakage), advice on water savings for business, education on water use of activities, consultation on implementing restrictions, what restrictions will mean, activities restricted and exemptions.
Other sectors	Any of the above as appropriate

Examples of previous messages and adverts





With the sun shining bright in the sky, we're seeing a higher demand for supply. When making the car look brand new, drop the jet wash - a bucket of water will do.

#UseWaterWisely and help us to manage supplies.



When filling paddling pools for your son or daughter, please remember to save the water. Re-using water is helpful and fun, as the kids can enjoy another day in the sun.

#UseWaterWisely and help us to manage supplies.

5. Timing and frequency

We will use the appropriate groups of key messages according to the level of operational status as outlined below. We have a continuous level of BAU communications activity and customer information, the range of messages used and frequency will increase according to the situation. The communication plans escalate as a dry weather situation progresses into drought and becomes increasingly severe through the drought plan trigger levels. A non-prescriptive approach maintains some flexibility according to the audience and channel to allow an agile communications strategy.

Overview and implementation

Operational status	Message theme	Implementation time
Normal (above Level 1)	BAU proactive water efficiency awareness and education	BAU
Environmental Stress	<p>Situation assessment and status – potential to worsen</p> <p>Usual messages for promotion of water efficiency, linked to environmental benefits. Enhanced water efficient messaging – switch to a meter, water use of certain activities.</p> <p>What we are doing to manage demands, and protect the environment- and how customers can help</p> <p>Engagement with local site managers and interest groups</p> <p>Bespoke education, advice and awareness visits</p> <p>Where we can help the local environment</p>	
Drought monitoring (Trigger Level 1)	<p>Situation assessment and status – increasing severity</p> <p>Enhanced Messages for promotion of water efficiency, switch to a meter, water use of certain activities, highlighting waste</p> <p>What we are doing to manage demands and protect the environment- and how customers can help.</p> <p>Leakage levels and updates on demand and demand management effectiveness</p> <p>Enhanced meter optant campaign</p> <p>Bespoke education, advice and awareness visits</p> <p>Updates on groundwater levels and licence agreements</p> <p>Potential for water restrictions.</p> <p>Awareness of water restrictions activities and process</p> <p>Updates on environmental support schemes</p>	Three days to one week
Drought management (Trigger Level 2)	<p>Situation assessment and status – increasing severity</p> <p>Enhanced Messages for promotion of water efficiency, switch to a meter, water use of certain activities, highlighting waste</p> <p>Appeals for restraint</p>	One week

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	<p>What we are doing to manage demands and protect the environment- and how customers can help.</p> <p>Leakage levels and updates on demand and demand management effectiveness</p> <p>Enhanced meter optant campaign</p> <p>Bespoke education, advice and awareness visits</p> <p>Updates on groundwater levels and licence agreements</p> <p>Potential for water restrictions.</p> <p>Awareness of water restrictions activities and process</p> <p>Consultation regarding implementation of restrictions</p> <p>Information on implementation of temporary use ban, activities restricted, exemptions</p> <p>How customers can get help</p> <p>Updates on environmental support schemes</p> <p>Regional messages on water use and restrictions</p> <p>Potential for impact to business – appeals for restraint</p> <p>Cross sector approach</p>	
Severe drought management (Trigger Level 3)	<p>As per Level 2, increasing urgency of messages</p> <p>National messages on water use and restrictions</p> <p>Awareness of further water restrictions activities and process</p> <p>Consultation for ordinary drought order</p> <p>Information on implementation of non-essential use, activities restricted, exemptions, compensation arrangements</p> <p>National approach</p> <p>Environmental urgency, day zero type messaging</p> <p>Impacts of rota cuts</p>	Three days
Emergency Plan invoked (Trigger level 4)	Emergency Drought Order – National and Govt led messaging	Three days
Drought cessation	<p>Situation assessment and status updates.</p> <p>consultation and liaison on relaxation/withdrawal of ban</p> <p>Proactive water efficiency awareness and education</p> <p>Thanking customers for efforts</p> <p>Information on effectiveness of measures and water savings</p>	Three days

Note: This plan does not detail the process by which each status is triggered or the associated decision making process.

Example Details of Communications Approach

Operational status	Messages	Audience	Channels	Frequency
Business as usual Above Level 1	Updates about water resources situation	Regulatory stakeholders (CCW, Environment Agency, DWI, Ofwat, etc) Neighbouring water companies	Meetings/face to face/1:2:1 Email	Monthly
	Updates about water resources situation Ongoing proactive water efficiency awareness and education	Customers Retailers	Website (www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) Social media H2Online customer community Direct customer contact: specialist roles/teams (education, water efficiency, catchment management, etc); mailings – regular billing cycle and bespoke mailings	Monthly/ weekly as required
Environment Stress Approaching Level 1	<p>“Our water resources are slightly below normal, we are managing our operations to address this. Please remember to use water wisely.”</p> <p>Reducing your water use can help your local river flows</p> <p>“The dry weather means groundwater levels are low. Help us save water.”</p> <p>Staff videos demonstrating water efficient activity</p> <p>Report a leak promotion: “Please support us in our increased leakage detection campaign by reporting any leaks you see.”</p>	Customers Retailers Regulators (some) Other organisations	<p>Website</p> <p>New webpage on TUBs and what it means</p> <p>Frequent updates to water resources page</p> <p>Social media H2Online community</p> <p>Social media advertising</p> <p>Direct customer contact: specialist roles/teams (education, water efficiency, catchment management, etc); mailings – regular billing cycle and bespoke mailings</p>	Weekly

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	Benefits of switching to a meter			
Level 1 and Level 2 (drought management)	<p>As above plus;</p> <p>“The prolonged hot weather means our water resources are under pressure. We’re working with the Environment Agency on this developing situation. Please use water wisely.”</p> <p>“If our water resources continue to be under pressure, we may have to implement a temporary use ban (TUB). Please use water wisely.”</p> <p>“Water is a precious resource.”</p> <p>Appeals to reduce demand</p> <p>“To protect supplies we have introduced a temporary use restriction. These restrictions are essential to ensure that supplies can continue to be maintained to customers in your area”</p> <p>Infographic to show what is covered under the TUB.</p> <p>Water facts and figures: A hosepipe uses 540 litres an hour, as much as a family of four would use in one day. A sprinkler left running overnight uses as much water as a family of four would use in one week A hosepipe ban can reduce water usage by 5-10% (according to research by UKWIR)</p>	All	<p>Website – message on homepage, videos and infographics</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>Social media advertising</p> <p>Editorial</p> <p>Advertising (bus or billboard)</p> <p>SMS/text messaging (targeted by areas of high use)</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Direct customer contact (esp for PSR): call centre; on the ground staff; specialist roles/teams; mailings – regular billing cycle and bespoke mailings</p> <p>Contact MPs and councillors</p> <p>Press releases/radio interviews</p> <p>WaterUK convene comms group for co-ordinated approach</p>	High – weekly/daily
Level 3 and approaching Level 4 (severe drought)	<p>As above plus;</p> <p>Consultations on non-essential use ban and impact</p> <p>Updates on our additional leakage efforts</p>	All	<p>Press releases/radio and TV interviews</p> <p>Video announcement by Managing Director</p> <p>Website Social</p>	High - daily

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management)	<p>“To protect supplies we have introduced further restrictions on water use. These restrictions are essential to ensure that supplies can continue to be maintained to customers “</p> <p>Infographic to show what is covered under a NEUB</p> <p>Appeal to reduce demand</p>		<p>media</p> <p>Social media advertising</p> <p>Editorial</p> <p>Advertising SMS/text messaging</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Direct customer contact (esp for PSR): call centre; on the ground staff; specialist roles/teams ; mailings – regular billing cycle and bespoke mailings</p>	
	<p>Warning re emergency drought order and that measures like standpipes may be needed if we don't all do our bit. Day zero and international comparisons</p> <p>Messages to dramatically reduce PCC.</p>			
Drought cessation	<p>Press release – announcing the end of the drought. Co-ordinated with Environment Agency messaging and that of other relevant stakeholders such as WRW.</p> <p>Social media messaging to announce the end of the drought and the lifting of restrictions.</p> <p>Ongoing water efficiency campaign to maintain the water efficiency culture developed during the drought.</p>	Customers Stakeholders	<p>Website</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>SMS/text messaging</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Mailings – regular billing cycle and bespoke mailings</p>	

NB: All of the above is to be repeated to employees through email updates etc

6. Monitoring and measures of success

The drought situation, and the effectiveness of communication measures, will be constantly monitored throughout the normal and enhanced communication process, and decisions to develop or modify successive actions will be made accordingly by the Drought Management Team.

We will monitor key data such as;

- Demand levels in response to campaigns, company level and DMA level
- Number of visitor/hits on the relevant sections of the website
- Social media stats and engagement
- Requests for water efficiency packs
- Request for meters
- Customer contacts relating to drought, consultations and water saving