APR 2024/25 – open data

Our Annual Performance Report (APR) contains a significant volume of data which is of interest to both within and outside the water industry. We want this data to be open and accessible to all.

What is open data?

Open data is data that is made available for anyone to access, use, and share. It is made freely available and in a common form, typically machine-readable.

Open data characteristics and benefits

We consider that there are key characteristics of data that enable stakeholders to get a better understanding of the information contained within both our APR and allow comparison across the industry. These are:

- **Structured Data -** The data should be in a machine-readable format which allows computers to understand it.
- **Standard Format -** The data should use established formats, for example CSV or XML to ensure consistency and compatibility across different systems. It should also be consistent over time to allow trend analysis.
- **Automated Processing -** The format should enable computers to automatically read and process the data without manual intervention.
- **Accessibility -** The data should be easily accessible and downloadable.

There are many benefits from publishing open data with the above characteristics:

- **Increased Reusability -** The data can be readily used in different applications and systems without extensive manual manipulation.
- **Enhanced Data Integration -** Machine-readable formats allow data to be combined from multiple sources.
- **Improved Data Analysis -** Automated processing allows for faster and more efficient analysis of large datasets.
- **Greater Transparency and Accountability -** Open and machine-readable data promotes transparency by making information readily available for public scrutiny.

Open data and our 2025 Annual Performance Report

We are part of Stream, a collaboration between UK water companies with a vision to unlock the potential of water data to benefit customers, society, and the environment.

Stream brings data and people together to address key water sector challenges. It contains an open data platform to enable users to find, understand and access the data they need to develop insights and create value from it. The website can be found [here](#).

Our APR for 2025 data can be found on the site along with APR24 and APR23. The data is accompanied by relevant metadata aligned to the characteristics outlined above. It also references the Ofwat Regulatory Accounting Guidelines (RAGs) which sets out all the definitions for each item of data. The latest RAGs can be found on Ofwat's website [here](#)

Although the RAGs are generally prescriptive, there are some areas where the guidance is more open to interpretation. An example is the tables where costs are allocated between different parts of the value chain. In order to aid users in comparing across the industry, we publish a methodology statement on our website alongside our APR.

Within our methodology we set out other important information including where there have been changes to the approach compared to the previous year and an explanation of any significant movement in values from the previous

year. This will help users to understand the consistency of information between years and whether there are any exceptional movements to take into account when looking at data trends.

We have also published our machine-readable version of the 2025 APR on our website at the following **link**.

Our open data roadmap

South Staffordshire Water supports the concepts of Open Data and are actively involved with data provision via the Stream Open Data programme, supported by the Ofwat Innovation Fund.

Stream operational updates at the end of the financial year (March 2025) ranked South Staffordshire Water 4th out of the 15 participating English & Welsh Water Companies for datasets published via the Stream Open Data portal.

At this point we have published several datasets including:

- APR data for 2023 to 2025;
- Domestic Consumption;
- Geographic Supply Area;
- Raw Water Storage Levels; and
- Water Quality data for 2022 and 2023.

We continue to work on the following datasets for forthcoming publication.

- EIR 24.
- Nightline (Night flow).
- Raw Water Quality.
- Water Quality 2024.

Our planned schedule is for these new datasets to be released in the first half of the 2025-26 financial year.

We recognise the value of Open Data, exemplified by the discussions associated with lead replacement policy led by external researchers analysing the sector wide Water Quality datasets. Further supporting this, we have confirmed they can supply the additional Water Quality parameters requested by the researchers to enable enhanced analysis associated with plumbosolvency.

Initial learning from this specific research suggests that from a plumbosolvency perspective Water Company only lead pipe replacements activity delivers no WQ plumbosolvency benefit, to deliver the full benefit all customer side lead pipework requires aligned replacement. As a concept, this example effectively illustrates the opportunity available from third party expert analysis of cross-sector water industry data to support accuracy of industry investment against required output. The APR is only one example of open data that we publish. On the Stream site, we currently produce other datasets, for example consumption, water quality and raw water storage levels.

Feedback and suggestions on our open data

Open data is continually evolving and there will be new and better ways of making our data more accessible. We therefore welcome any comments on our approach and suggestions of how we could improve. In particular:

- What do you use the current open data for? Are there particular areas of data that you are particularly interested in or where more detail would be of use?
- Is there a better way to present our data in an open data format?
- Should any data be made available on a more regular basis than annually?
- Is the metadata helpful? Are there any further explanations that would make things clearer?

We also want to use the learnings of opening up our data to drive other open data releases. As a water company, we publish many other key datasets including Business Plans, Water Resource Management Plans and charges. There is also

data that we use internally but may also be of interest to a wider audience. We would welcome views on what other data, not currently on our roadmap, could have value in being published in an open data format.

Please send any comments to regulation@south-staffs-water.co.uk