# UK faces driest spring on record amid rising drought risks and calls for urgent water conservation



The United Kingdom is currently experiencing its driest spring on record, as reported by the Met Office, which indicates that average rainfall is significantly below the long-term average. While early in the week some regions were subjected to heavy showers and thunderstorms, the prevailing trend has been one of warm, dry weather, which is expected to persist for at least another ten days.

The Environment Agency has raised concerns regarding a "medium" risk of summer drought. Although reservoir levels are currently deemed healthy, certain areas, including Greater London, Hampshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and Yorkshire, have not seen rainfall for up to 20 days. This extended dry spell is indicative of a broader pattern observed in March 2025, which was officially recorded as the sunniest March in England since records began in 1910, with a remarkable 185.8 hours of sunshine—59% above the average—and only 43% of the expected rainfall during that period.

The implications of this extended dryness are not purely immediate; water companies across the UK, including Northumbrian Water, are issuing warnings about potential hosepipe bans. They cite persistently low rainfall and decreasing national water storage, which has dropped from 90% in April 2022 to 84% currently. As the Met Office suggests a forecast of average rainfall but possibly higher temperatures from May to July, water companies are urging customers to conserve water and adopt prudent consumption habits to mitigate potential shortages and minimise household costs.

However, the water crisis presents a complex interplay of climate factors. Climate change models indicate that by mid-century, significant portions of England could become prone to flooding, with projections that one in four properties will be at risk due to rising sea levels and increased rainfall intensity. Currently, around 6.3 million properties are vulnerable, a figure expected to rise to 8 million by 2050. The Environment Agency emphasises the necessity for local authorities to incorporate improved data and modelling into their planning to address these evolving risks effectively.

Meanwhile, regulatory progress on climate adaptation remains contentious. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) has deemed the UK government's preparations for climate-induced flooding and extreme weather as inadequate. While there has been an adaptation plan introduced in 2023, the CCC criticises the slow pace of implementation across various sectors, including infrastructure, health, and agriculture, underscoring a need for clear long-term goals and robust assessments of climate-related risks.

Overall, the current climatic conditions in the UK are both a pressing concern and a wake-up call for comprehensive water management strategies as well as improved infrastructure resilience in the face of the changing environment.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/weather/articles/c5y64p3m7pyo), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/weather/articles/c5y64p3m7pyo)
2. Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/weather/articles/c5y64p3m7pyo), [[3]](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2025/a-record-breaking-march-for-sunshine)
3. Paragraph 3: [[4]](https://www.homebuilding.co.uk/news/water-companies-warn-of-potential-hosepipe-bans-soon)
4. Paragraph 4: [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/64e788c6-5dd7-472d-ae14-26653de2b847)
5. Paragraph 5: [[7]](https://www.ft.com/content/9af67d0a-129b-4e2c-8675-656538a33925)
6. Paragraph 6: [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/jun/03/may-spring-warmest-record-uk-met-office)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/weather/articles/c5y64p3m7pyo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/weather/articles/c5y64p3m7pyo> - The BBC article reports that the UK is experiencing its driest spring on record, with the Met Office confirming that the average rainfall is significantly below the long-term average. The warm and dry conditions are expected to persist for at least another 10 days. The Environment Agency has indicated a 'medium' risk of a summer drought, despite current healthy reservoir levels. Some regions, including Greater London, Hampshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and Yorkshire, have experienced 20 days without rainfall, contributing to the overall dryness.
3. <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2025/a-record-breaking-march-for-sunshine> - The Met Office reports that March 2025 was England's sunniest since records began in 1910, with 185.8 hours of sunshine, 59% more than the long-term average. The UK experienced its third sunniest March overall, and Wales its second. The month was also notably dry, with the UK recording just 43% of its average rainfall for March. Southern England and parts of south Wales recorded only a fifth of their long-term average rainfall, with some areas receiving less than 5mm of rain.
4. <https://www.homebuilding.co.uk/news/water-companies-warn-of-potential-hosepipe-bans-soon> - Several UK water companies, including Northumbrian Water, are warning of potential hosepipe bans due to persistently low rainfall and decreasing reservoir levels. National water storage is currently at 84%, down from 90% in April 2022, particularly affecting northern regions. The Met Office forecasts average rainfall and possibly higher temperatures from May to July. Despite varied outlooks, all water companies urge customers to conserve water and avoid waste. Water UK offers advice on efficient water usage to mitigate shortages and reduce household bills.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/64e788c6-5dd7-472d-ae14-26653de2b847> - A report from the Financial Times highlights that by mid-century, one in four properties in England will be at risk of flooding, according to the Environment Agency's updated models incorporating climate change effects. Currently, 6.3 million properties are prone to flooding from rivers, seas, or surface water, a number expected to rise to 8 million by 2050. The updated risk assessment emphasizes the need for local authorities to focus on mitigation and adaptation during planning, using improved data and modeling.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/jun/03/may-spring-warmest-record-uk-met-office> - The Guardian reports that May 2024 was the warmest on record in the UK, with an average mean temperature of 13.1°C, surpassing the previous record of 12.1°C set in 2008. The meteorological spring (March, April, and May) was also the warmest on record, with an average mean temperature of 9.37°C, influenced by high overnight temperatures. The report notes that eight of the top ten warmest springs have occurred this century, including all of the top five.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/9af67d0a-129b-4e2c-8675-656538a33925> - The Financial Times reports that the UK government's preparations for climate change-induced flooding and extreme weather are deemed 'inadequate' by the Climate Change Committee (CCC). The CCC criticized progress on climate adaptation across several sectors, including infrastructure, health, agriculture, and energy. Despite a 2023 adaptation plan and commitments to improved resilience, there has been little significant progress, with some areas such as water management and marine monitoring reportedly deteriorating. The report urges the government to set clear, long-term adaptation goals and assess climate risks to the energy grid.