# Britons face rising water bills and drought risk after driest spring in over a century



Britons are being strongly urged to conserve water amid rising concerns over potential restrictions, such as hosepipe bans, due to the UK's driest spring in over a century. This alarming situation has prompted water authorities to call for responsible usage as the threat of drought looms over England this summer. With rainfall levels at approximately 80.6mm, the UK has already recorded about 20mm less than the historic low of 100.7mm set back in 1852. As the season progresses, the Met Office acknowledges the uncertainty regarding the final tally of spring rainfall.

According to the Environment Agency, the risk of drought is currently deemed 'medium', contingent largely on the weather over the coming months. Parts of England experienced hosepipe bans in previous years due to soaring temperatures, and the effects of these hot spells are palpable once again. Tim McMahon, from Southern Water, indicated that without “significant periods of rain over the next three months,” drought conditions could become a worrying reality.

In response to the dire water situation, Southern Water recommends practical measures that households can adopt. For instance, reducing shower time by just two minutes can save as much as 6,000 litres of water annually. Additionally, turning off the tap while brushing teeth could conserve over 5,000 litres per year per person, while gardeners might save upwards of 1,000 litres an hour by opting for watering cans instead of hoses. These small adjustments, while seemingly minor, could collectively have a substantial impact on water preservation.

South East Water's Nick Price has noted that the recent warm and dry weather has led to "the highest levels of water demand we have ever seen for this time of year.” Thames Water highlighted a disparity between groundwater levels, which remain above average, and river flows in its catchment areas, which have fallen below average. Though SES Water asserts that it is well-prepared for the summer, the overarching sentiment remains that no one can influence the weather, urging all consumers to adopt a conscientious approach to water usage.

Amid these concerns, households are also facing rising water bills, with an average increase of £86 expected over the forthcoming year alone. This spike represents just a fraction of an overall 36 per cent rise allowable by Ofwat over five years, bringing average bills to £597 by 2030. Some companies, such as Southern Water, are imposing increases as high as 53 per cent, and Severn Trent customers will see a 47 per cent rise, both figures being calculated before inflation is taken into account.

The broader implications of these bill increases are significant. Unlike energy suppliers, water customers have no flexibility to choose their provider, leaving them no option but to either adapt their consumption habits or bear the financial burden. Recent reports reveal that this surge in household expenses is compounded by historical context, representing the largest increase in water charges since the privatisation of water services in 1989. Consumer advocates are expressing growing concerns over affordability, particularly as these hikes come amidst increased pressures from broader economic conditions.

As the risk of drought compounds with rising bills, it is clear that the UK's water scarcity challenges demand urgent cooperation from the public and resilient infrastructure development from utility companies. Initiatives, such as a staggering £104 billion investment aimed at upgrading facilities and enhancing water supply sustainability, emphasise the necessity for ongoing support tailored to both environmental issues and consumer needs.

The combination of weather unpredictability and financial strain poses a significant challenge for both households and water companies alike. As the call for responsible water usage continues, these turbulent conditions may well dictate an essential shift in how communities approach their water consumption moving forward.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14727079/Brits-urged-shorter-showers-avoid-hosepipe-bans-countrys-dry-spell-sparks-drought-fears-water-bills-soar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14727079/Brits-urged-shorter-showers-avoid-hosepipe-bans-countrys-dry-spell-sparks-drought-fears-water-bills-soar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14727079/Brits-urged-shorter-showers-avoid-hosepipe-bans-countrys-dry-spell-sparks-drought-fears-water-bills-soar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14727079/Brits-urged-shorter-showers-avoid-hosepipe-bans-countrys-dry-spell-sparks-drought-fears-water-bills-soar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/jan/30/water-bills-in-england-and-wales-to-rise-by-123-on-average-this-year)
* Paragraph 5: [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/2023-04-25/where-are-hosepipe-bans-in-place-across-the-uk), [[5]](https://www.itv.com/news/2023-06-16/drought-hosepipe-bans-and-water-shortages-is-another-dry-summer-ahead)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14727079/Brits-urged-shorter-showers-avoid-hosepipe-bans-countrys-dry-spell-sparks-drought-fears-water-bills-soar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/feb/02/households-in-england-and-wales-face-biggest-water-bills-rise-in-decades), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/jan/30/water-bills-in-england-and-wales-to-rise-by-123-on-average-this-year)
* Paragraph 7: [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/feb/02/households-in-england-and-wales-face-biggest-water-bills-rise-in-decades), [[6]](https://www.water.org.uk/news-views-publications/news/more-3-million-households-receive-reduced-bills-water-companies)
* Paragraph 8: [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/feb/02/households-in-england-and-wales-face-biggest-water-bills-rise-in-decades), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/jan/30/water-bills-in-england-and-wales-to-rise-by-123-on-average-this-year)
* Paragraph 9: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14727079/Brits-urged-shorter-showers-avoid-hosepipe-bans-countrys-dry-spell-sparks-drought-fears-water-bills-soar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/feb/02/households-in-england-and-wales-face-biggest-water-bills-rise-in-decades), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/jan/30/water-bills-in-england-and-wales-to-rise-by-123-on-average-this-year)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14727079/Brits-urged-shorter-showers-avoid-hosepipe-bans-countrys-dry-spell-sparks-drought-fears-water-bills-soar.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.itv.com/news/2023-04-25/where-are-hosepipe-bans-in-place-across-the-uk> - This article discusses the implementation of hosepipe bans across various regions in the UK due to increased demand and dry conditions. It highlights the bans in Kent and Sussex, Cornwall, and Devon, emphasizing the impact of working from home on water usage. The piece also mentions the driest February in England since 1993 and the potential for drought conditions to persist into the summer. The article underscores the importance of responsible water usage during these times.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/feb/02/households-in-england-and-wales-face-biggest-water-bills-rise-in-decades> - This article reports on the significant rise in water bills for households in England and Wales, marking the largest increase since privatization in 1989. It details the average £123 rise in bills, with some companies proposing even higher increases. The piece also discusses the planned £70 billion investment by water firms to address environmental issues and improve water supplies. Consumer groups express concerns about affordability and the need for consistent support across different regions.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/jan/30/water-bills-in-england-and-wales-to-rise-by-123-on-average-this-year> - This article highlights the substantial increase in water bills for customers in England and Wales, with an average rise of £123. It details the percentage increases proposed by various water companies, including Southern Water, South West Water, Thames Water, and Yorkshire Water. The piece also mentions the £104 billion investment program approved by the regulator Ofwat, aiming to address infrastructure needs and environmental concerns. The article provides insights into the financial challenges faced by the water industry and the impact on consumers.
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/2023-06-16/drought-hosepipe-bans-and-water-shortages-is-another-dry-summer-ahead> - This article examines the potential for another dry summer in the UK, following the driest summer in nearly 30 years in 2022. It discusses the introduction of hosepipe bans in Cornwall and Devon due to record demand during a heatwave. The piece also highlights the driest February in England since 1993 and the possibility of drought conditions returning in 2023. Experts emphasize the need for careful water usage and preparation for potential water shortages.
6. <https://www.water.org.uk/news-views-publications/news/more-3-million-households-receive-reduced-bills-water-companies> - This article announces that over 3 million households will receive reduced water bills as part of a record-breaking investment by water companies. It details the support measures, including social tariffs and payment breaks, aimed at assisting customers struggling with bills. The piece also outlines the £104 billion investment program approved by the regulator Ofwat, focusing on building new reservoirs, upgrading wastewater treatment works, and improving river protection. The article highlights the industry's efforts to balance affordability with infrastructure development.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/feb/02/households-in-england-and-wales-face-biggest-water-bills-rise-in-decades> - This article reports on the significant rise in water bills for households in England and Wales, marking the largest increase since privatization in 1989. It details the average £123 rise in bills, with some companies proposing even higher increases. The piece also discusses the planned £70 billion investment by water firms to address environmental issues and improve water supplies. Consumer groups express concerns about affordability and the need for consistent support across different regions.