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STATISTICAL RELEASE

1 May 2018

**STATISTICS ON ENGLISH COASTAL AND INLAND BATHING WATERS:
A SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE 2006 BATHING WATER DIRECTIVE**

We have revised the 2017 bathing water statistics as we have amended the classification of one bathing water following new evidence.

These results summarise the compliance of coastal and inland bathing waters to the Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) for England in 2017. Datasets on compliance for coastal and inland bathing waters in England are available to [download](#)

Headline results

- **In 2017, out of the 413 bathing waters measured in England, 406 (98.3 per cent) met at least the minimum standard of the Bathing Water Directive.**
- **In 2017, 271 bathing waters in England (65.6 per cent) met the excellent standard of the Bathing Water Directive.**
- **In 2017, 7 bathing waters in England (1.7 per cent) did not meet the minimum standard, and were classified as poor.**

Context

This is the third year of implementing the new classification system. Like last year, this year's release covers only bathing waters in England, and not those for the whole of the United Kingdom; details regarding bathing waters in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are signposted at the end of the release. The results using the current system

are not directly comparable to those results produced prior to 2015. The release compares this year's results with the England-only results from the last two years.

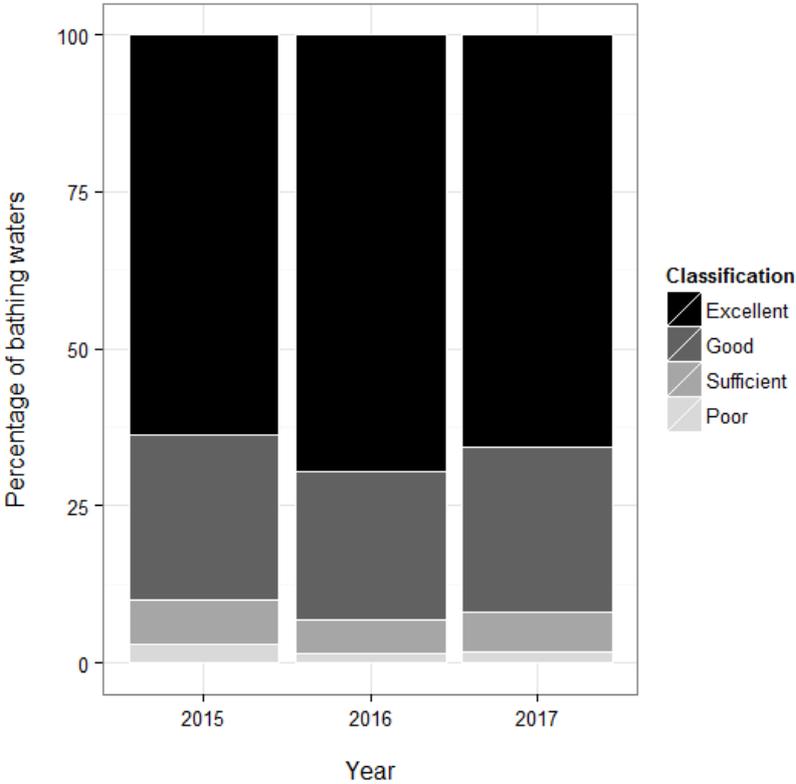
For every designated bathing water in England, the Environment Agency monitors *Escherichia coli* and intestinal enterococci in the water, throughout the bathing season. Values can vary; depending on the weather, pollution from agricultural and urban sources, storm water overflows, amongst other factors. The readings taken over the last four bathing seasons then determine the annual classification for that water. The 2017 results cover the period from 2014 to 2017. The classifications are:

- Excellent – the highest, cleanest class
- Good – generally good water quality
- Sufficient – the water quality meets the minimum standard
- Poor – the water quality has not met the minimum standard.

In 2017, there was no access to two bathing waters, no measurements were taken at these waters.

Analysis

Bathing Water Classification: England



Source: Environment Agency (EA)

The number of bathing waters in England meeting at least the minimum standard dropped slightly from 98.5 per cent in 2016 to 98.3 per cent in 2017; and remains above the 97.1 per cent in 2015. Likewise, the number of bathing waters in England meeting the excellent or good standard over the last three years remains largely stable at

around 92 per cent. While the number of poor bathing waters stays below 2 per cent for the second year in a row.

Bathing Water Classification: England

	2015	2016	2017
Bathing waters assessed	415	413	413
Excellent	264 (63.6%)	287 (69.5%)	271 (65.6%)
Good	110 (26.5%)	98 (23.7%)	109 (26.4%)
Sufficient	29 (7.0%)	22 (5.3%)	26 (6.3%)
Poor	12 (2.9%)	6 (1.5%)	7 (1.7%)

Background information

These statistics have been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which sets out eight principles including meeting user needs, impartiality and objectivity, integrity, sound methods and assured quality, frankness and accessibility. More information on the Official Statistics Code of Practice can be found at:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/>

To help those deciding where to swim, information is online <https://www.gov.uk/quality-of-local-bathing-water> and on signs at the beach or lake from May.

Notes

England: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>

Scotland: http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/bathing_waters.aspx

Wales: <http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/waterflooding/bathing-water-quality-and-beaches/?lang=en>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/bathing-water-quality>

Eurostat: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/index_en.html