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STATISTICAL RELEASE

12 December 2018

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

We have revised the 2018 bathing water statistics released on the 15 November 2018, as we have amended the classification of one bathing water following new evidence.

These results summarise the compliance of coastal and inland bathing waters for England in 2018. Datasets on compliance for coastal and inland bathing waters in England are available to [download](#)

Headline results

- **In 2018, out of the 420 bathing waters measured in England, 411 (97.9 per cent) met at least the minimum standard of the Bathing Water Directive.**
- **In 2018, 282 bathing waters in England (67.1 per cent) met the Excellent standard of the Bathing Water Directive.**
- **In 2018, 9 bathing waters in England (2.1 per cent) did not meet the minimum standard, and were classified as Poor.**

Context

This is the fourth year of implementing the classification system. As in the past two years, 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.

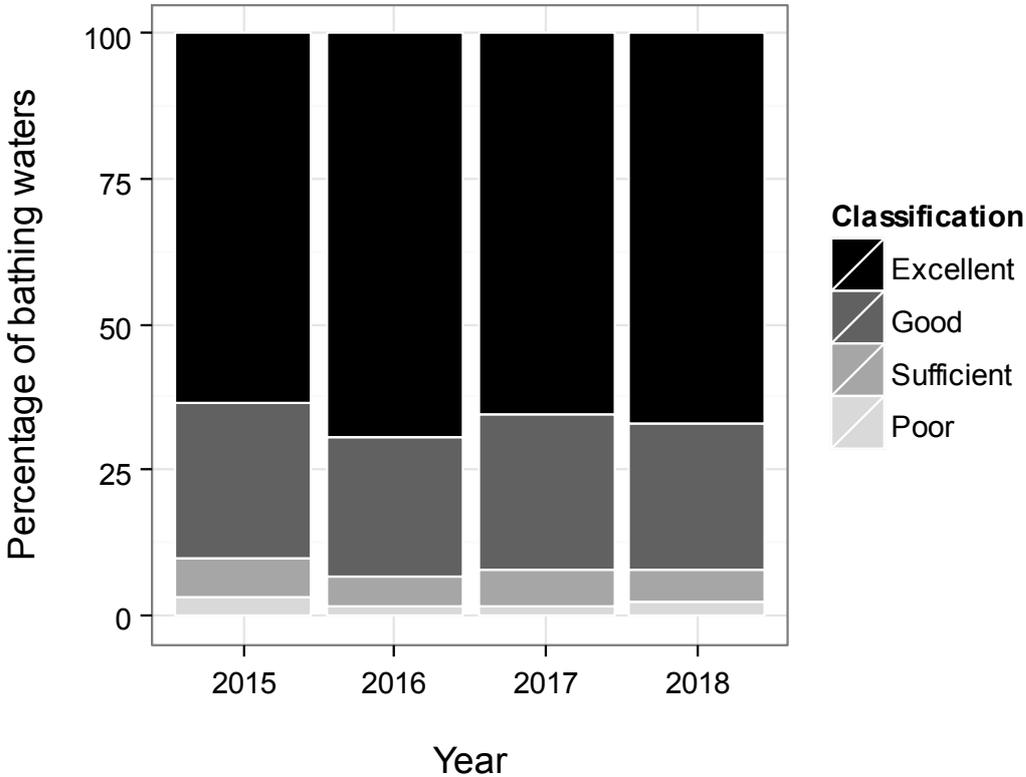
For every designated bathing water in England, the Environment Agency monitors *Escherichia coli* and intestinal enterococci in the water, throughout the bathing season. Values can vary; depending on the weather, pollution from agricultural and urban sources, storm water overflows, amongst other factors. The readings taken over the last four bathing seasons then determine the annual classification for that water. The 2018 results cover the period from 2015 to 2018. As two bathing waters don't have a measurement for each of the four years, they are unassessed.

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.

Analysis

Bathing Water Classification: England



Source: Environment Agency (EA)

The number of designated bathing waters in England rose by 7. Those bathing waters meeting at least the minimum standard has dropped slightly over the last two years from 98.5 per cent in 2016 to 97.9 per cent in 2018; 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 continues to track around 2 per cent.

Bathing Water Classification: England

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bathing waters assessed	415	413	413	420
Excellent	264 (63.6%)	287 (69.5%)	271 (65.6%)	282 (67.1%)
Good	110 (26.5%)	98 (23.7%)	109 (26.4%)	106 (25.2%)
Sufficient	29 (7.0%)	22 (5.3%)	26 (6.3%)	23 (5.5%)
Poor	12 (2.9%)	6 (1.5%)	7 (1.7%)	9 (2.1%)

Percentages are rounded to nearest decimal place

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

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