



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR

Public enquiries (phone): 08459 335577
Public enquiries (email): enviro.statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Media enquiries: 020 7238 6479

Responsible Statistician: Stuart Homann (Environment Agency)

STATISTICAL RELEASE

13 November 2019

STATISTICS ON ENGLISH COASTAL AND INLAND BATHING WATERS

COMPLIANCE WITH THE 2006 BATHING WATER DIRECTIVE

These results summarise the compliance of coastal and inland bathing waters for England in 2019. Datasets on compliance for coastal and inland bathing waters in England are available to [download](#).

Headline results

- **In 2019, out of the 420 bathing waters measured in England, 413 (98.3 per cent) met at least the minimum standard of the Bathing Water Directive.**
- **In 2019, 300 bathing waters in England (71.4 per cent) met the Excellent standard of the Bathing Water Directive.**
- **In 2019, 7 bathing waters in England (1.7 per cent) did not meet the minimum standard, and were classified as Poor.**

Context

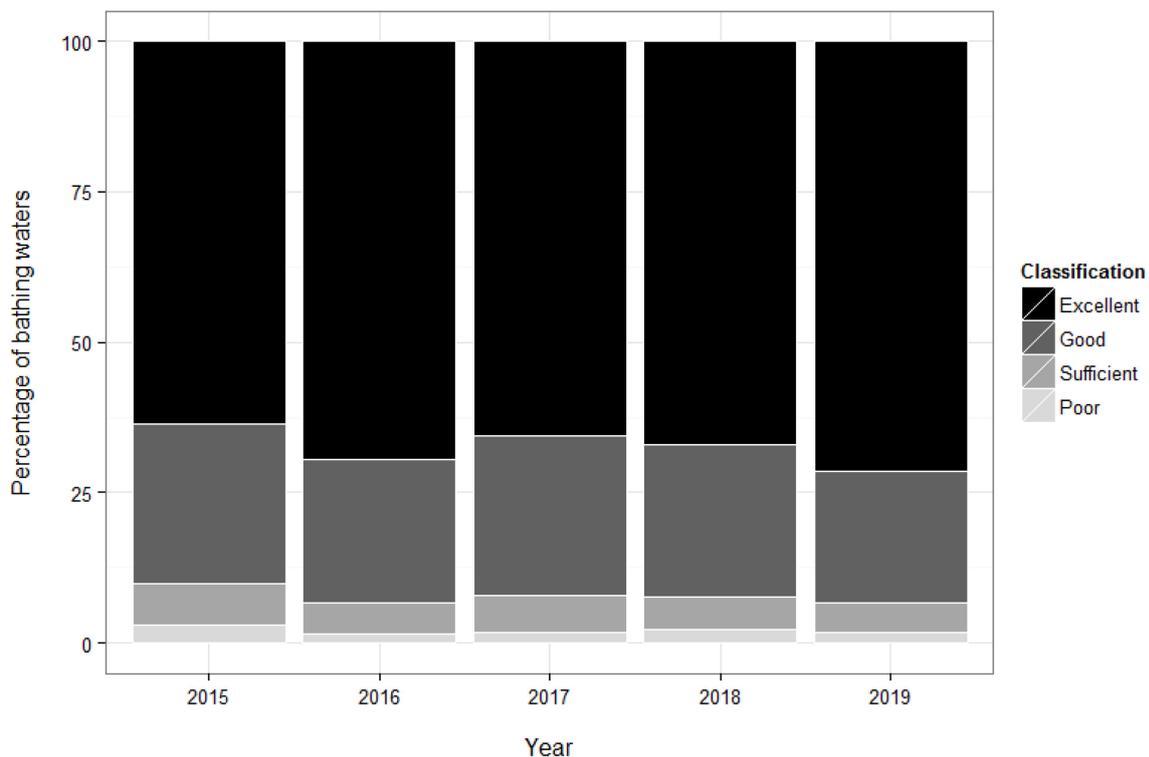
For every designated bathing water in England, the Environment Agency monitors (*Escherichia coli*) and intestinal enterococci in the water, throughout the bathing season (15 May to 30 September). Values can vary; depending on the weather, pollution from agricultural and urban sources, storm water overflows, amongst other factors. The readings taken over the last four bathing seasons then determine the annual classification for that water. The 2019 results cover the period from 2016 to 2019. One bathing water is unassessed because there are no measurements at that water for 2019; the most recent of the four year classification period.

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)**

Since last year, the number of designated bathing waters in England fell by 1 to 421. Those bathing waters meeting at least the minimum standard has risen to 98.3 per cent; a similar level to that seen in 2016. Likewise, the number of bathing waters in England meeting the Excellent or Good standard over the last four years remains above 92 per cent; with this year, for the first time, seeing more than 70 per cent of bathing waters achieving the Excellent standard. The number of Poor bathing waters continues to track below 2 per cent.

Bathing Water Classification: England

Classification	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Bathing waters assessed	415	413	413	420	420
Excellent	264 (63.6%)	287 (69.5%)	271 (65.6%)	282 (67.1%)	300 (71.4%)
Good	110 (26.5%)	98 (23.7%)	109 (26.4%)	106 (25.2%)	92 (21.9%)
Sufficient	29 (7.0%)	22 (5.3%)	26 (6.3%)	23 (5.5%)	21 (5.0%)
Poor	12 (2.9%)	6 (1.5%)	7 (1.7%)	9 (2.1%)	7 (1.7%)

Percentages are subject to rounding errors.

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.

To help those deciding where to swim, information is [online](#) and on signs at the beach or lake from May.

Background information on bathing waters around the UK

[England](#)

[Scotland](#)

[Wales](#)

[Northern Ireland](#)

[Eurostat](#)

Public Enquiries: 08459 335577; Media enquiries: 020 7238 6479

END