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STATISTICAL RELEASE

8 November 2016

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

These results summarise the compliance of coastal and inland bathing waters to the Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) for England in 2016. Datasets on compliance for coastal and inland bathing waters in England are available to [download](#)

Headline results

- **In 2016, out of the 413 bathing waters measured in England, 407 (98.5 per cent) met at least the minimum standard of the Bathing Water Directive.**
- **In 2016, 287 bathing waters in England (69.5 per cent) met the excellent standard of the Bathing Water Directive.**

In 2016, 6 bathing waters in England (1.5 per cent) did not meet the minimum standard, and were classified as poor.

Context

Last year saw the first year of implementing the new classification system. Unlike 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 new 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 last year.

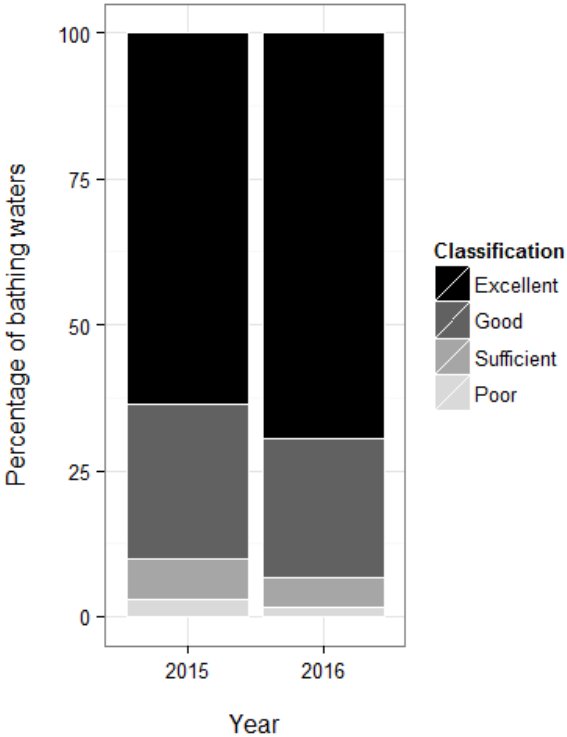
For every designated bathing water in England, the Environment Agency monitors *Escherichia coli* and *intestinal enterococci* in the water, throughout the bathing season. Values can vary; depending on the weather, pollution from agricultural and urban sources, storm water overflows, amongst other factors. The readings taken over the last four bathing seasons then determine the annual classification for that water. The 2016 results cover the period from 2013 to 2016. The new 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 2016, four bathing waters were de-designated. As there was no access to two bathing waters this year, no measurements were taken at these waters.

Analysis

Bathing Water Classification: England 2015 and 2016



Source: Environment Agency (EA)

The number of bathing waters in England meeting at least the minimum standard rose from 97.1 per cent in 2015 to 98.5 per cent in 2016. Likewise, the number of bathing waters in England meeting the excellent standard rose from 63.6 per cent in 2015 to 69.5 per cent in 2016. These improvements are largely due to:

- Improvements being made in the infrastructure at, or near, a number of bathing waters over recent years;

- More favourable weather conditions over the last four years. The 2015 results included the 2012 bathing season, which was notably wet with subsequently poorer quality. While the 2016 bathing season started wet, weather conditions improved during the course of this season.

Bathing Water Classification: England 2016

Classification	Percentage	Numbers
Excellent	69.5%	287 bathing waters
Good	23.7%	98 bathing waters
Sufficient	5.3%	22 bathing waters
Poor	1.5%	6 bathing waters

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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