Monthly water situation report: Midlands

1 Summary - January 2026

Please see Section 7.3 for a map detailing the Midlands regional coverage of this report.

Rainfall - In January, the majority of the Midlands catchments received notably high rainfall totals relative to the long term average (LTA).

Soil moisture deficit – In January, soil moisture deficit (SMD) across the Midlands remained the same since last month. Soils have remained saturated and at field capacity.

River flows - In January, all sites recorded normal or above monthly mean flows relative to the LTA with Worksop recording exceptionally high monthly mean flows.

Groundwater levels - By the end of January, all sites recorded normal or higher groundwater levels compared to the LTA. Rider Point continued to record exceptionally high groundwater levels.

Reservoir stocks - By the end of January, the majority of the Midlands reservoirs had above average storage compared to the LTA with 6 reservoirs full and spilling.

1.1 Rainfall

January has continued being a wet month with all catchments in the Midlands receiving more than 110% of their LTA rainfall totals. The Tame hydrological catchment was the only catchment to have received exceptionally high rainfall totals of 181% of the LTA. Nine catchments received notably high rainfall totals ranging from 155% to 185% of the LTA. The remaining 2 catchments, Dove and Welsh Mountains, received above normal and normal rainfall totals, respectively.

Over the past 3 months, the majority of the Midlands catchments received exceptionally high rainfall totals relative to their 3 month LTA. This reflects the cumulative impacts of multiple named storms, each of which brought intense rainfall events across the Midlands. In particular, the Lower Trent catchment received the highest November to January cumulative rainfall relative to the 3 month LTA. This makes it the wettest November to January period since records began. Several hydrological catchments also ranked within their top 10 wettest November to January periods since records began.

Over the past 6 months, all catchments received more than 110% of their 6 month LTA meaning that on average, conditions have been wet. The only catchment that received exceptionally high rainfall totals over the last 6 months was the Derwent. Seven catchments received notably high rainfall totals relative to the 6 month LTA. The remaining 4 catchments

received above normal rainfall totals over the last 6 months. These were Welsh Mountains, Mid Severn, Avon and Soar hydrological catchments.

Over the past year, all catchments received normal rainfall totals relative to their 12 month LTA.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

SMD across the Midlands in January has remained the same since last month. Soils have remained saturated and at field capacity following the wet conditions this month. Soils in the majority of the Midlands catchments had SMD values as expected for the time of year. The exceptions were the Lower Trent and Soar catchments which had wetter than average soils for the time of the year.

1.3 River flows

In January, Worksop recorded exceptionally high monthly mean flows of 196% relative to the LTA. Five sites recorded notably high monthly mean flows ranging from 148% to 188% of their LTA. These were Walcot, Clifton Hall, Tenbury, Butts Bridge and Evesham. Nine sites recorded above normal monthly mean flows relative to their LTA. The remaining 5 sites recorded normal monthly mean flows ranging from 103% to 126% of their LTA. These were Whatstandwell, Great Bridgeford, Bewdley, Llanyblodwel and Redbrook.

Wedderburn Bridge has been showing unreliable data from September 2024 onwards; therefore, data has been removed from this report.

1.4 Groundwater levels

By the end of January, 4 sites in the Midlands recorded above normal groundwater levels compared to their LTA. These were Weir Farm, Anthony's Cross, Coxmoor and Crossley Hill. As with last month, Rider Point recorded exceptionally high groundwater levels compared to its LTA. Southards Lane and St Mary's Church recorded notably high groundwater levels compared to their LTA. The remaining 2 sites recorded normal groundwater levels compared to their LTA. These were Four Crosses and Ram Hall.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

By the end of January, 7 of the Midlands reservoirs had above average storage compared to the LTA. With the exception of Draycote reservoir, all of these were full and spilling. The remaining 3 reservoirs either recorded average or below average storage compared to the LTA. These were Clywedog at 87%, Carsington and Ogston at 86% and Dove at 62% of their LTAs.

Reservoir storage increased since last month for the majority of the Midlands reservoirs. The exceptions were the Dove reservoir which decreased and Tittesworth and Blithfield which remained at 100%.

1.6 Environmental impact

Both the West Midlands and East Midlands moved into drought recovery incident status on 8 December 2025. We continue to work with water companies and other abstractors to manage water resources.

1.7 River Severn operations

The River Severn is regulated to maintain a minimum flow at Bewdley gauging station. This ensures sufficient water flows along the river to support environmental and water supply requirements. Regulation is instigated when flows drop below a threshold.

River Severn regulation was not instigated in January.

1.8 River Wye operations

Throughout January, flows at Redbrook were above the regulation threshold and storage at Elan reservoirs was above the release control line. Therefore, regulation releases were not in operation during January.

1.9 Water abstraction restrictions

As of 31 January 2026, there is 1 water abstraction licence restriction in place across the Midlands affecting 2 licences in total.

Table 1.1: Water abstraction licence restrictions

Area	Rivers and stations restricted
West Midlands	Garren Brook at Marstow Mill

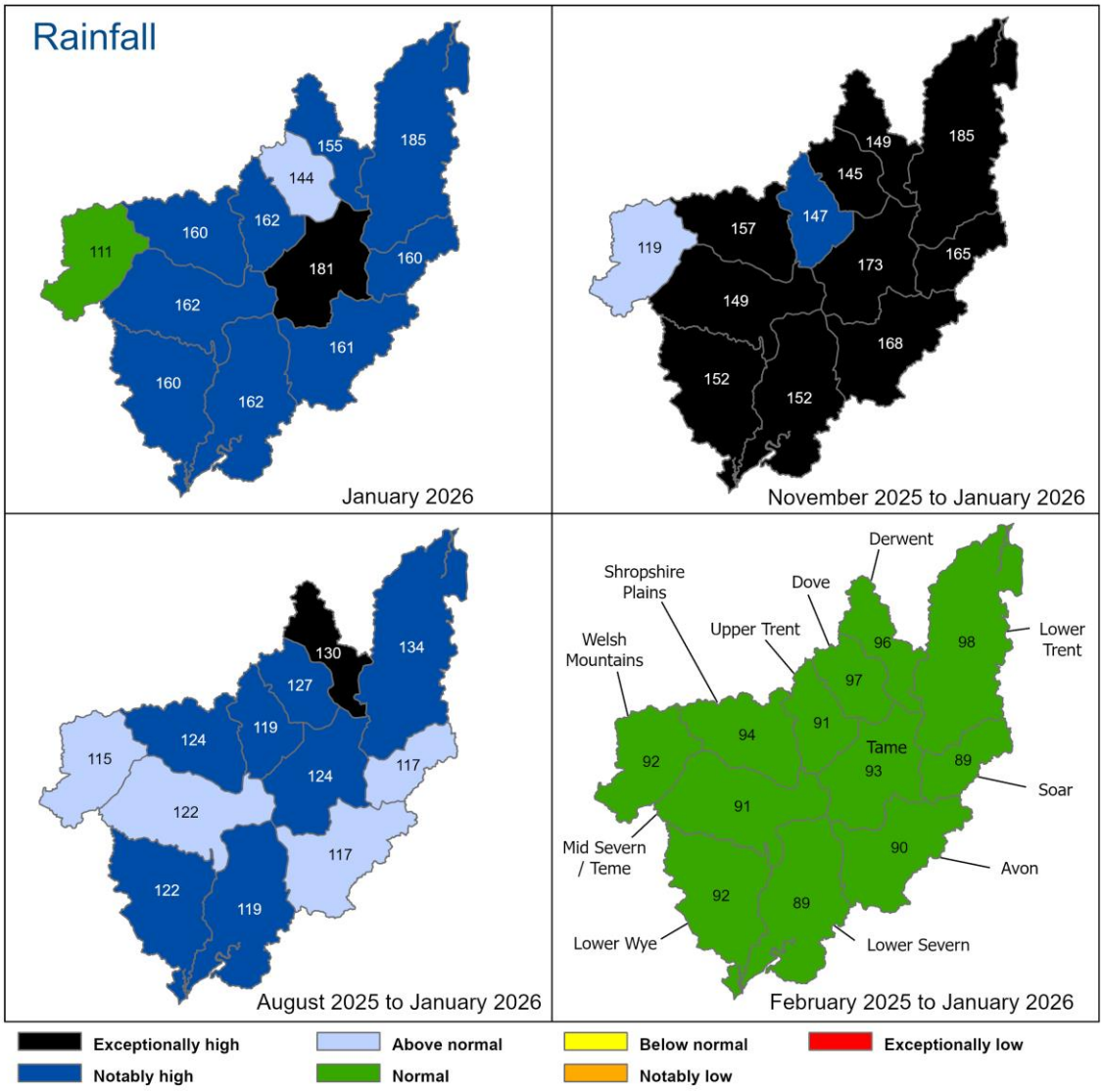
Author: Midlands Hydrology, midlandshydrology@environment-agency.gov.uk

Contact Details: 03708 506 506

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

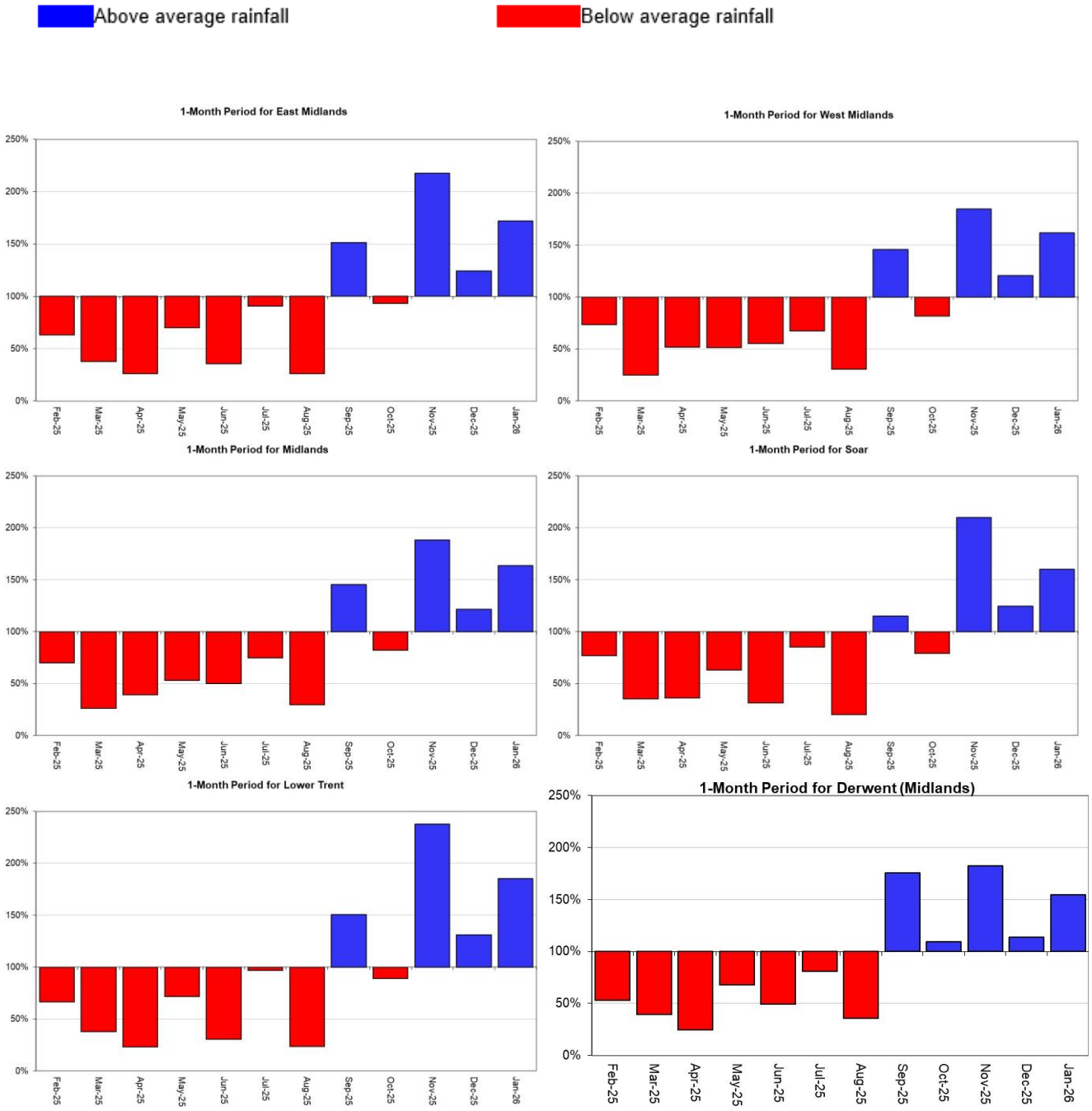
Figure 2.1: Rainfall as % LTA for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 January 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, relative to an analysis of respective historic totals from 1991 to 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

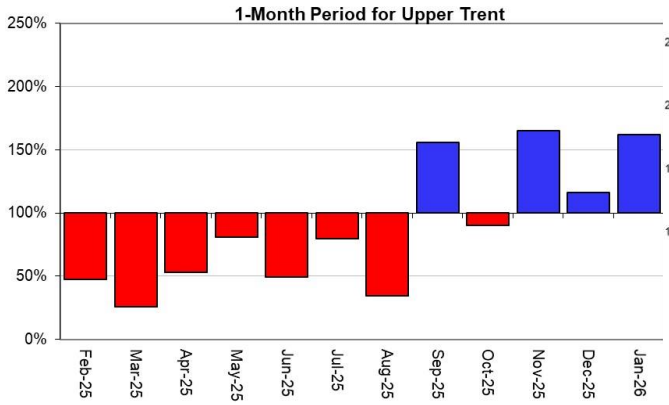


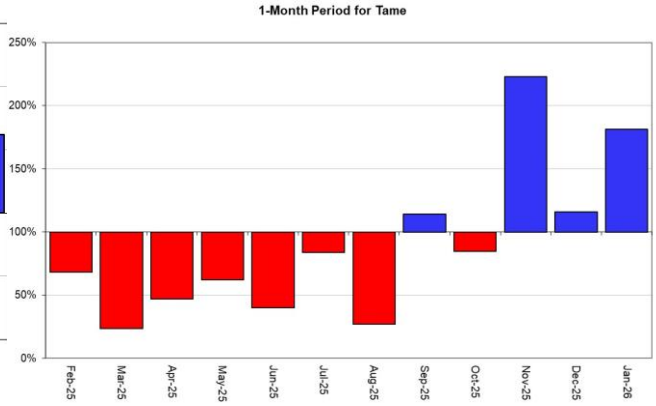
Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2025). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from registered rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

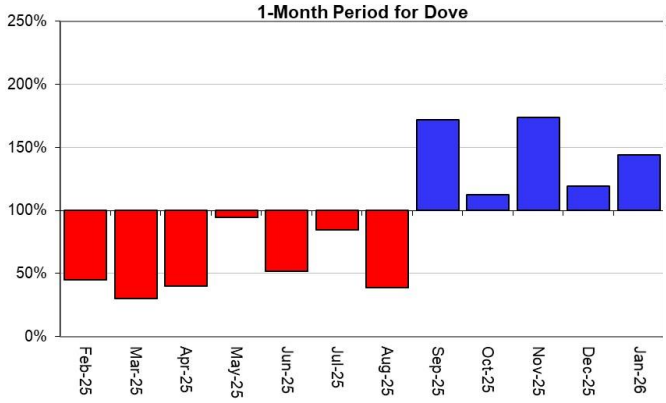
2.2 Rainfall charts

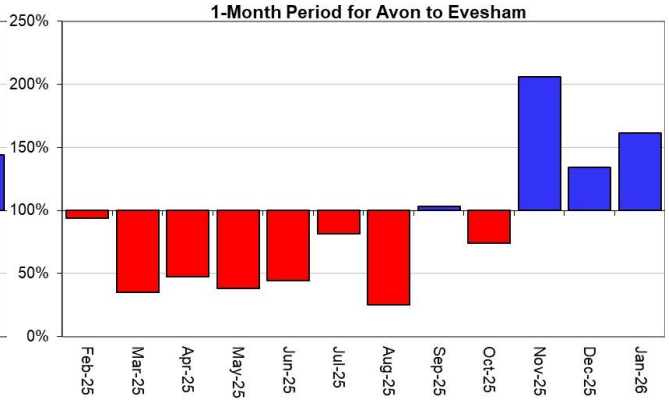
Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for hydrological areas across the Midlands region.

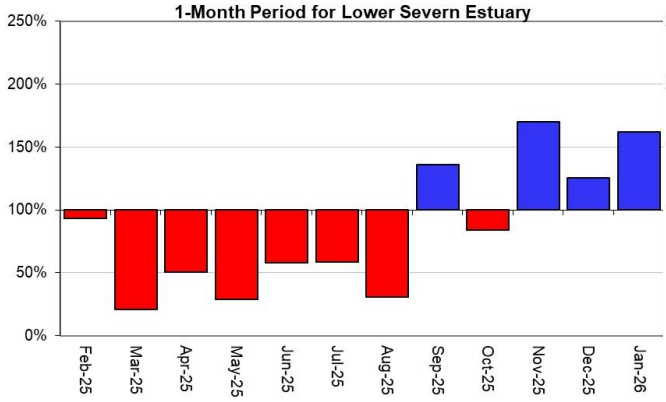


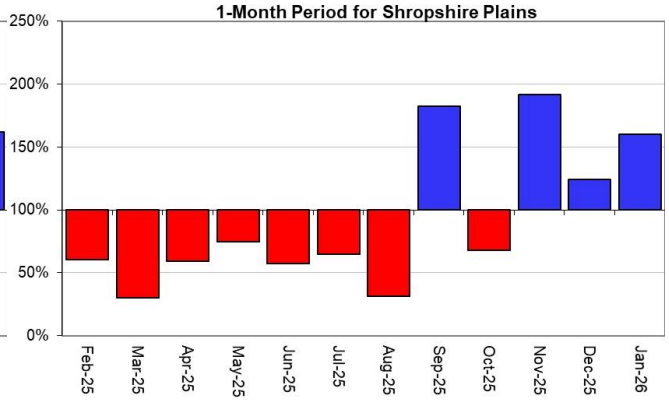

1-Month Period for Upper Trent
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Feb-25
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26

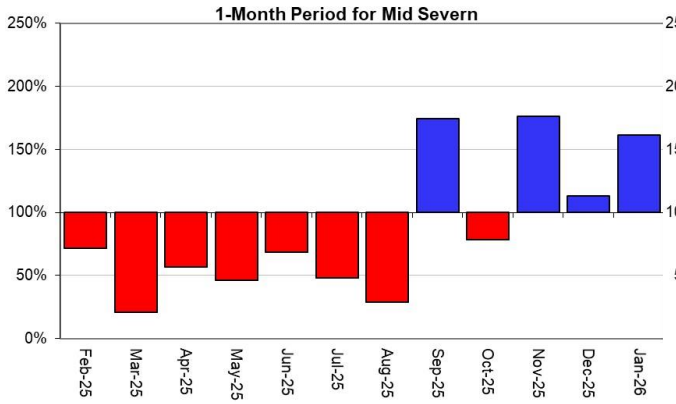

1-Month Period for Tame
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Feb-25
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26

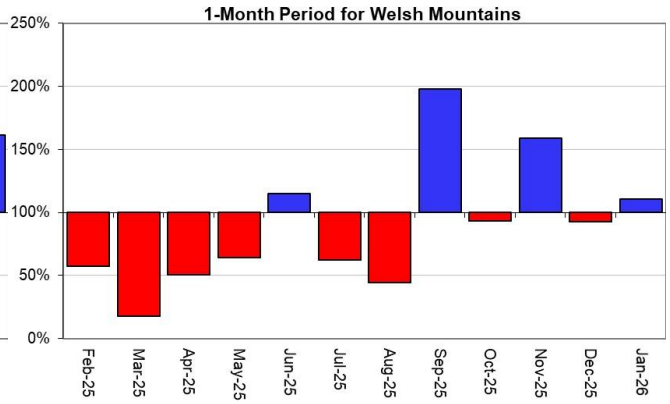

1-Month Period for Dove
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Feb-25
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26

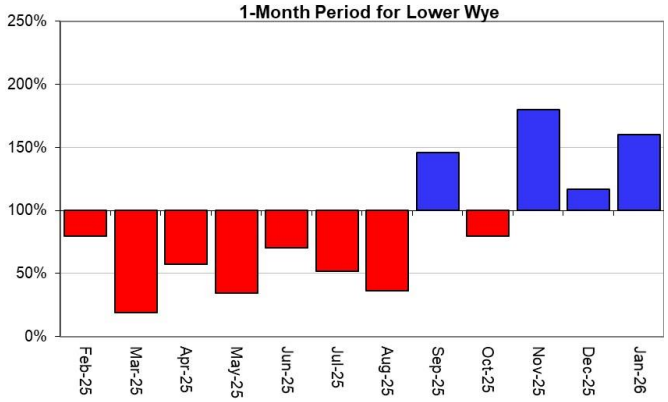

1-Month Period for Avon to Evesham
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Feb-25
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26


1-Month Period for Lower Severn Estuary
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Feb-25
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26


1-Month Period for Shropshire Plains
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Feb-25
Mar-25
Apr-25
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26





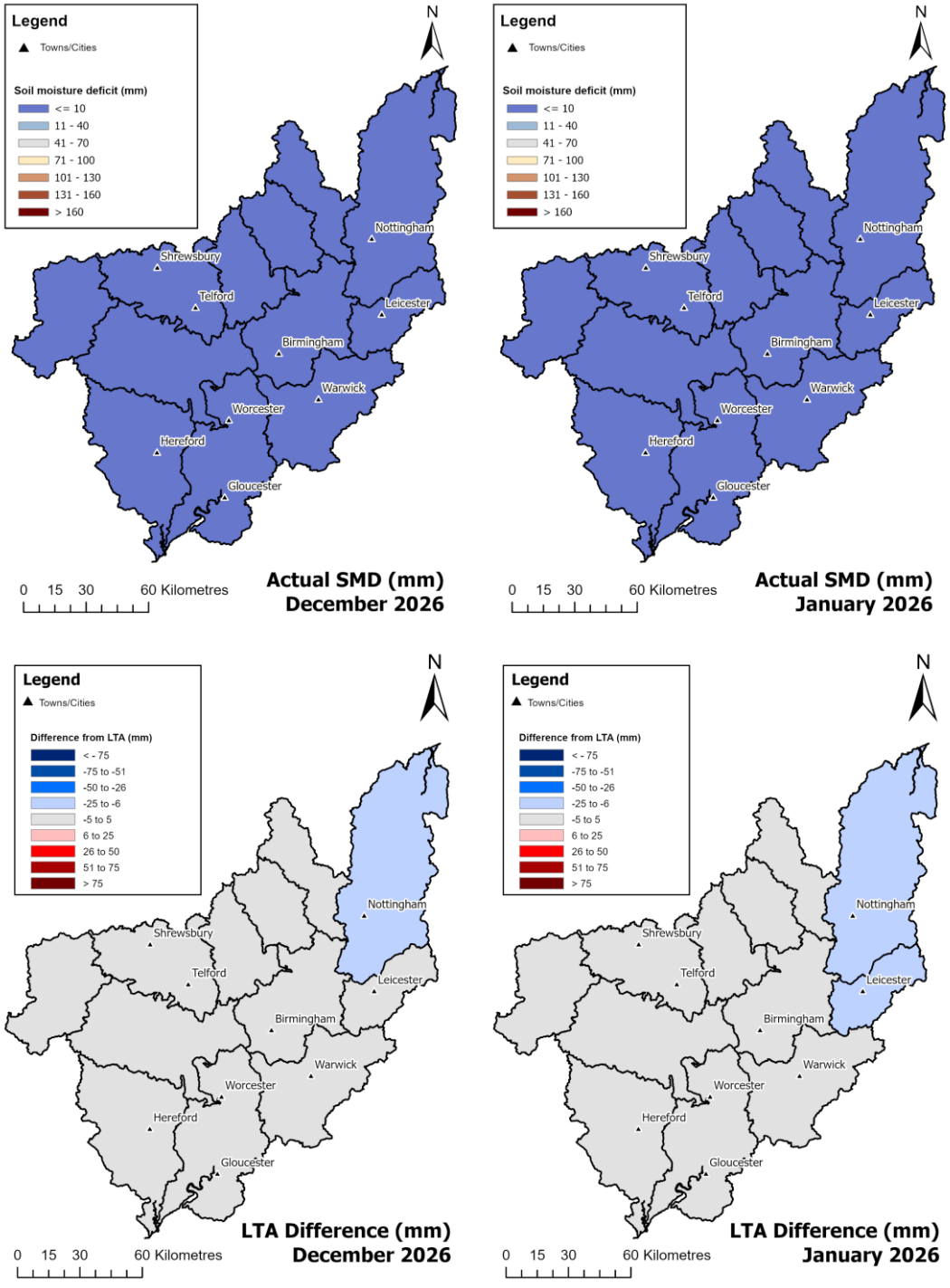


Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2025). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from registered rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

3 Soil moisture deficit

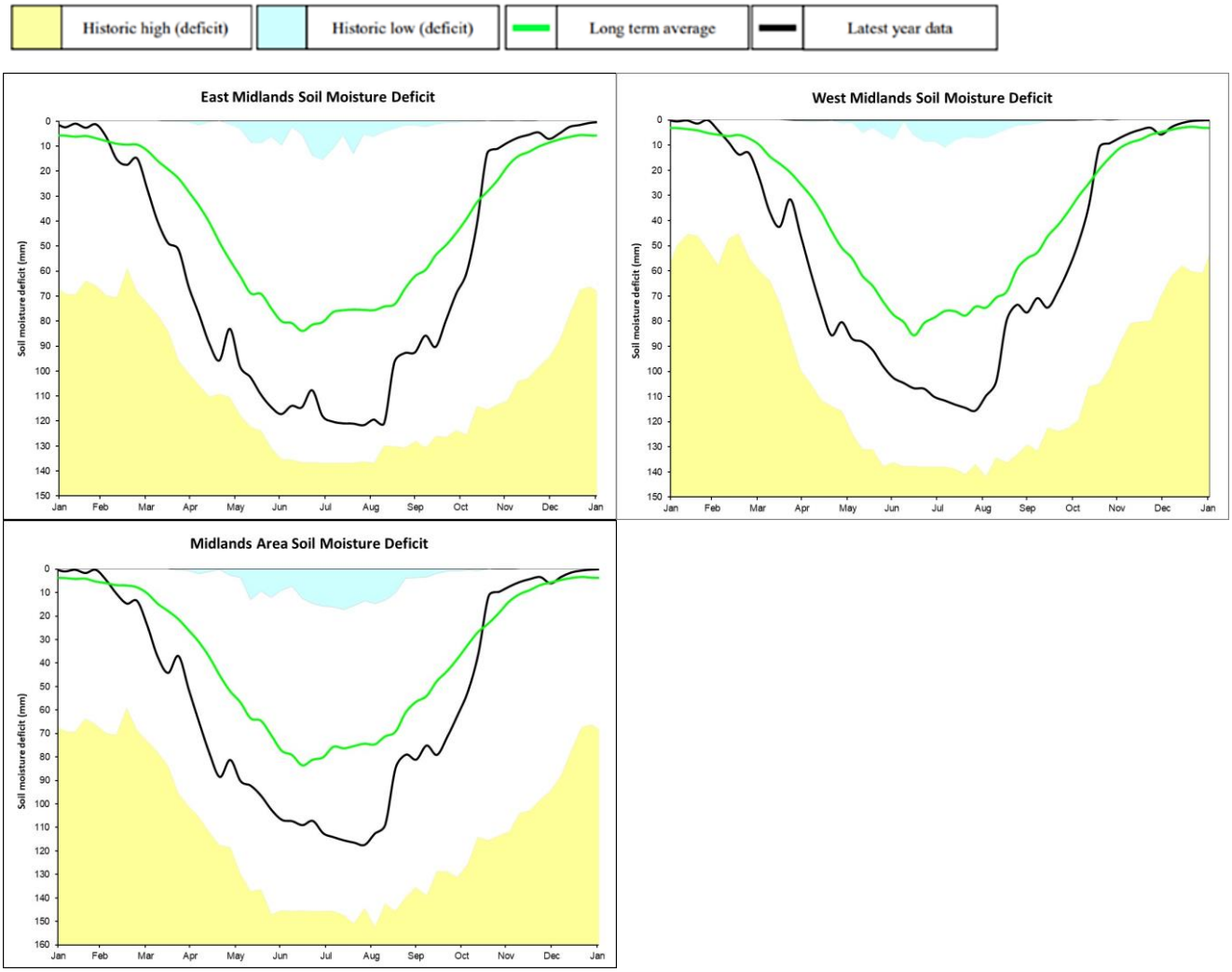
3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 31 January 2026. The difference (mm) of the actual soil moisture deficit from the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. MORECS data for real land use.



3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

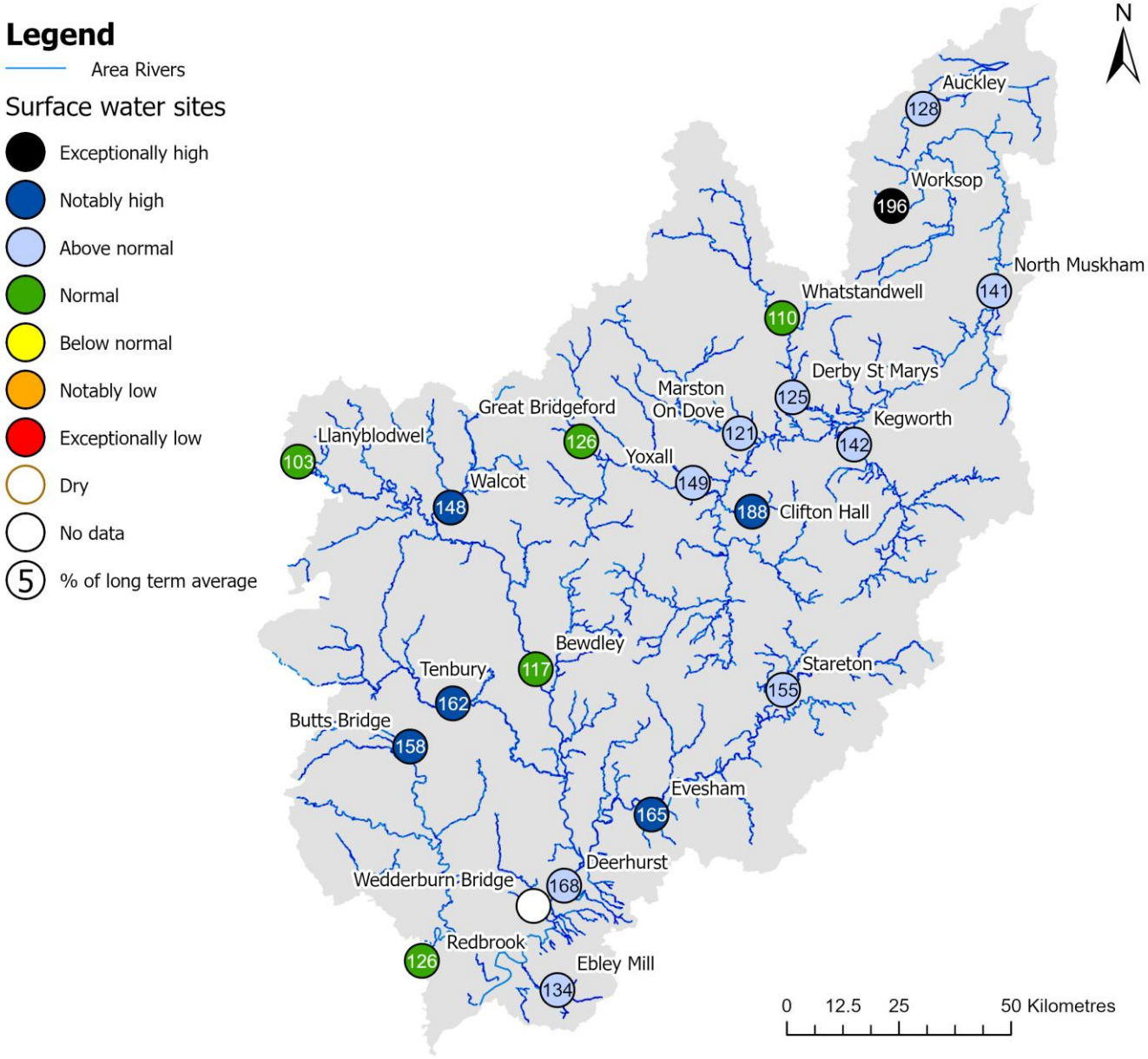
Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit charts for selected areas across the Midlands.



4 River flows

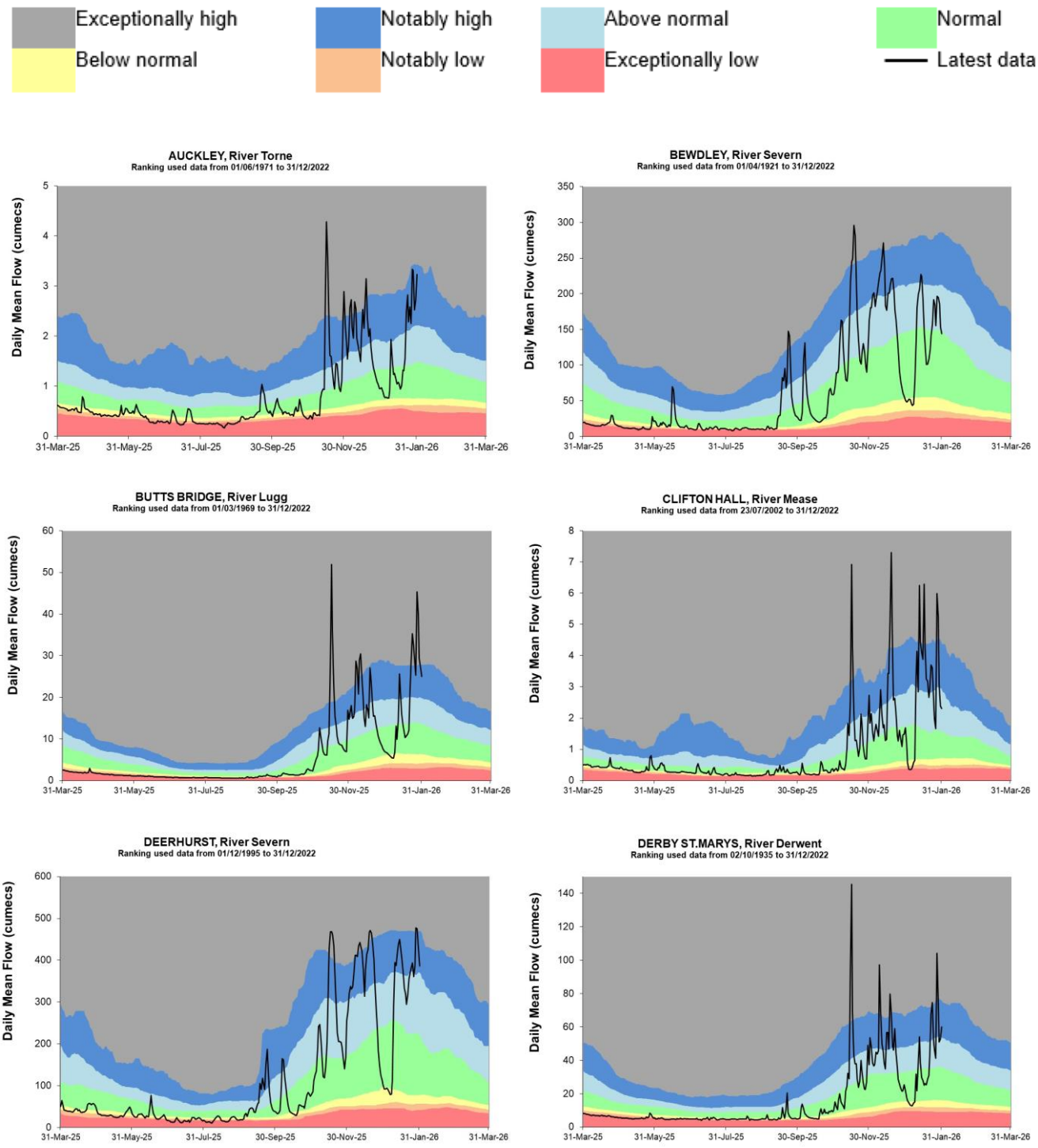
4.1 River flows map

Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for January 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic January monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

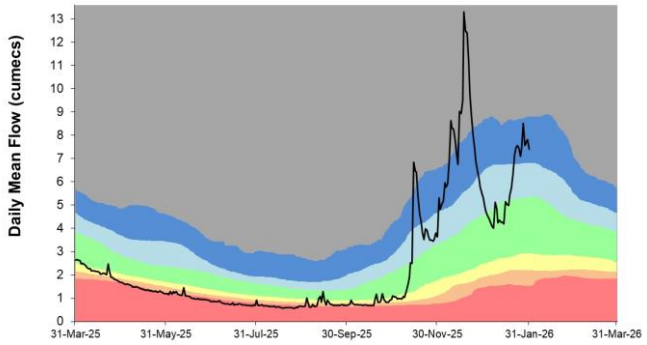


4.2 River flow charts

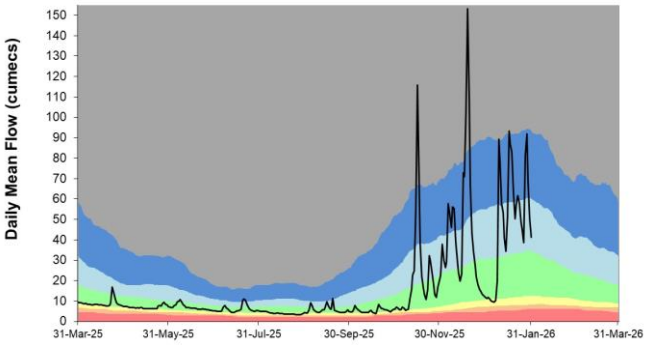
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.



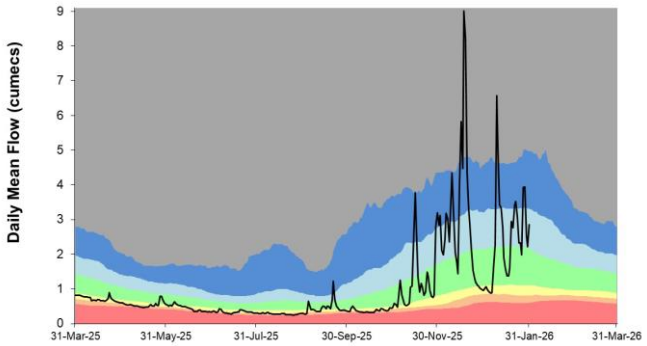
EBLEY MILL, River Frome
Ranking used data from 01/04/1969 to 31/12/2022



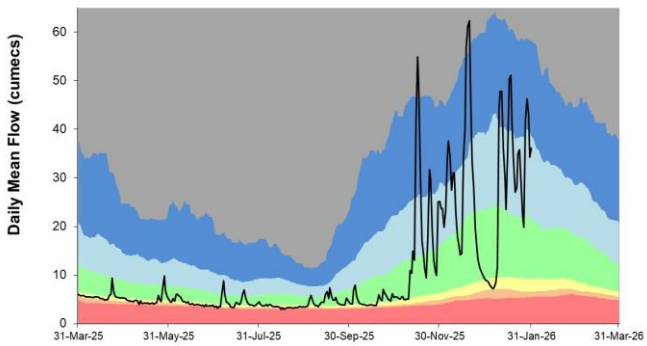
EVESHAM, River Avon
Ranking used data from 01/12/1936 to 31/12/2022



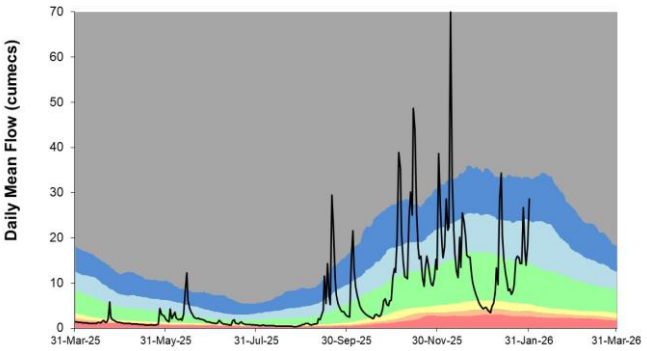
GREAT BRIDGFORD, River Sow
Ranking used data from 18/01/1971 to 31/12/2022



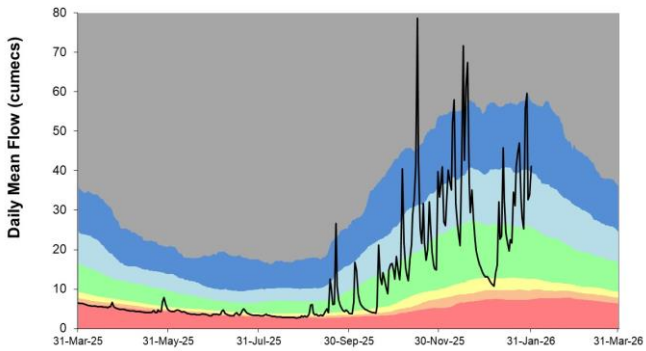
KEGWORTH, River Soar
Ranking used data from 01/12/1978 to 31/12/2022



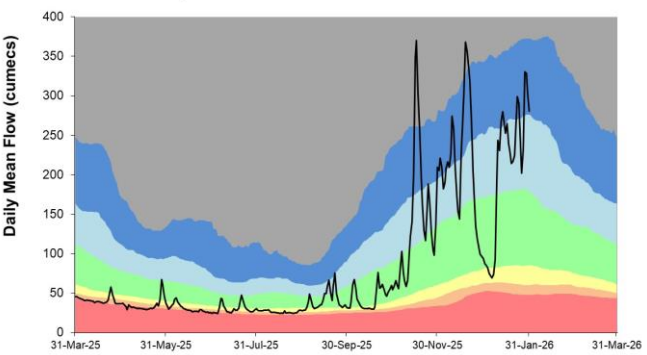
LLANYBLODWEL, Afon Tanat
Ranking used data from 01/06/1973 to 31/12/2022



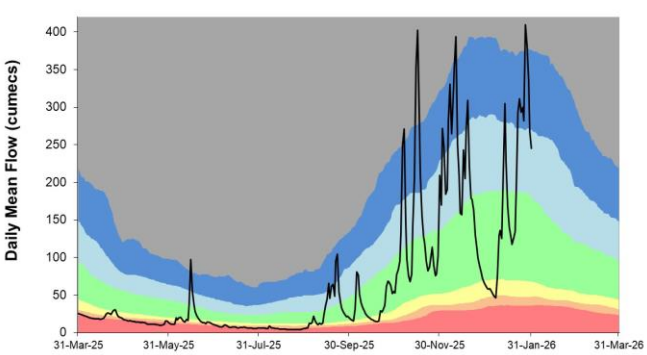
MARSTON ON DOVE, River Dove
Ranking used data from 01/07/1965 to 31/12/2022

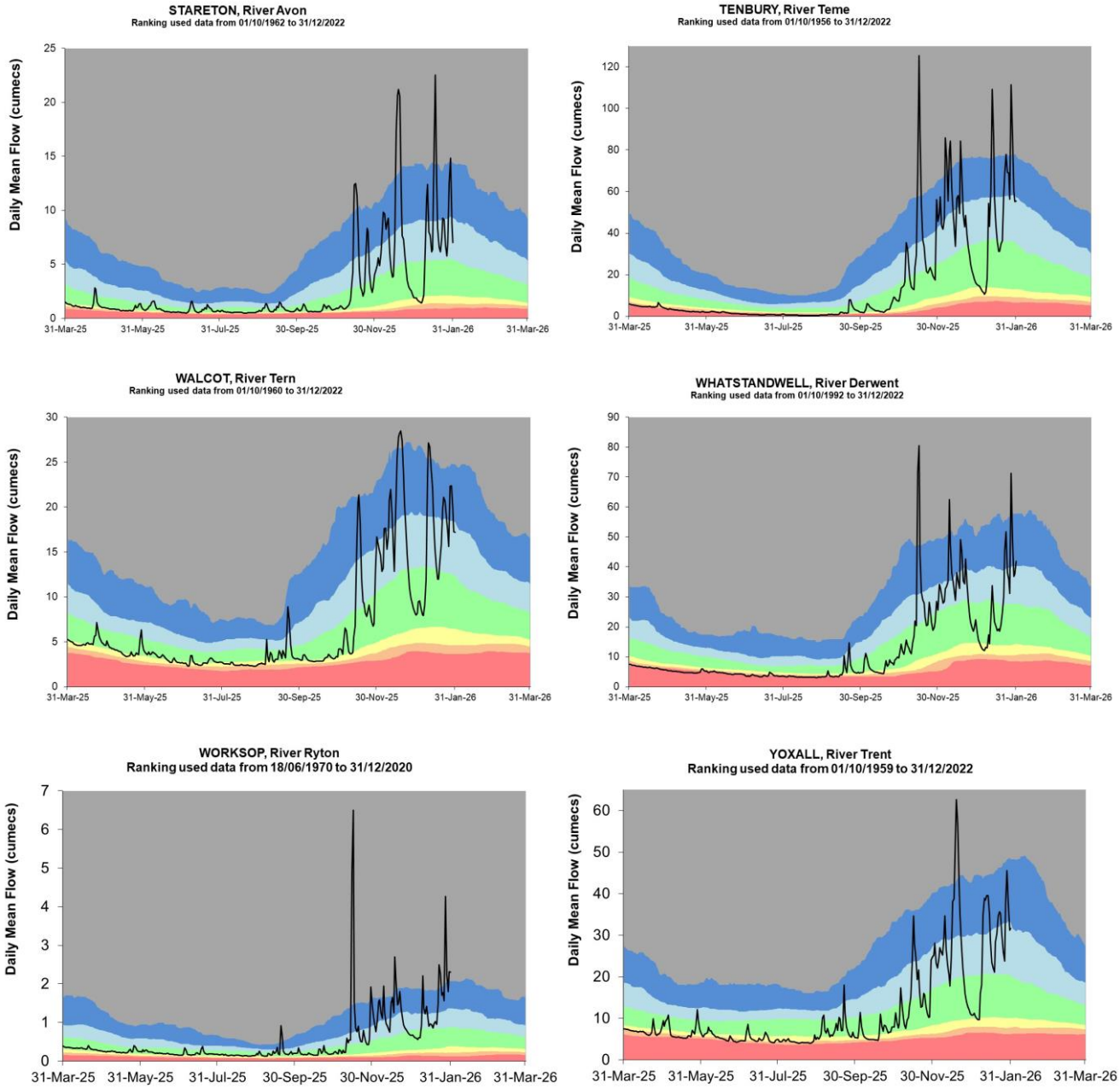


NORTH MUSKHAM, River Trent
Ranking used data from 03/10/1969 to 31/12/2022



REDBROOK, River Wye
Ranking used data from 01/10/1969 to 31/12/2022



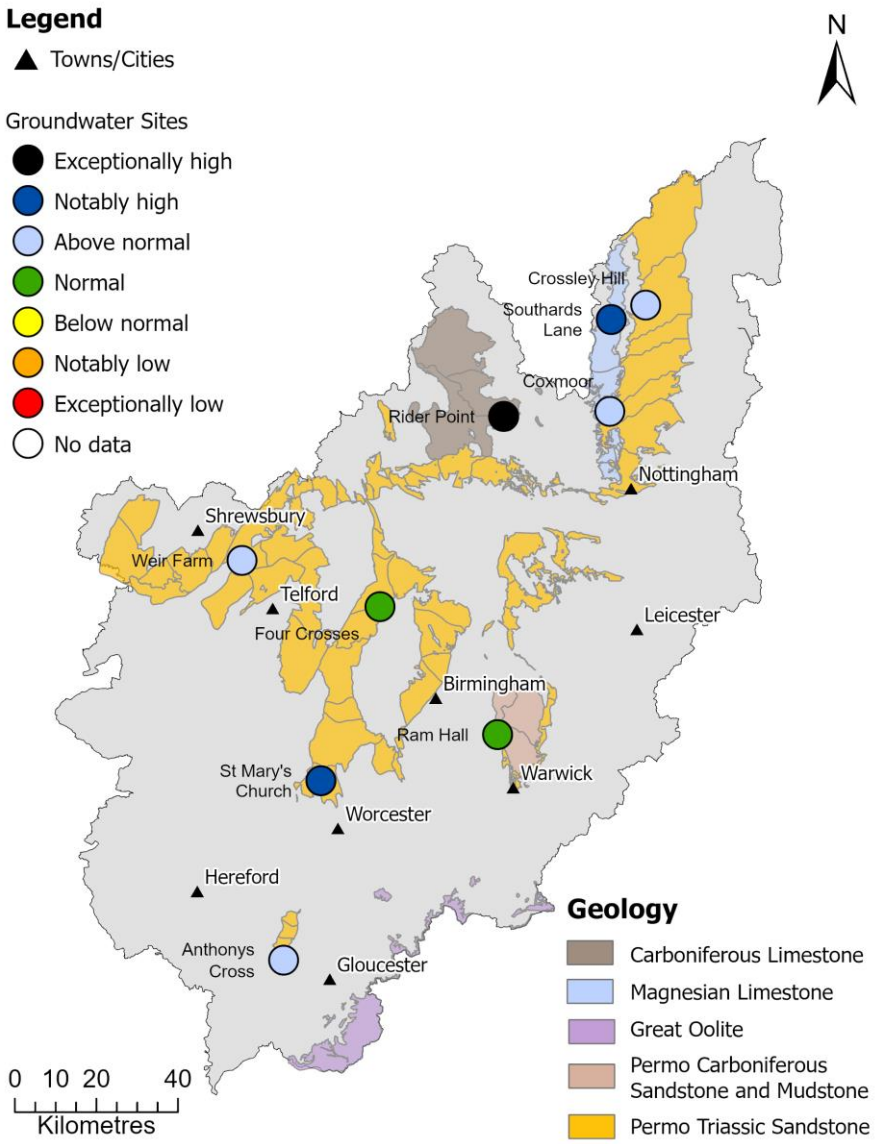


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

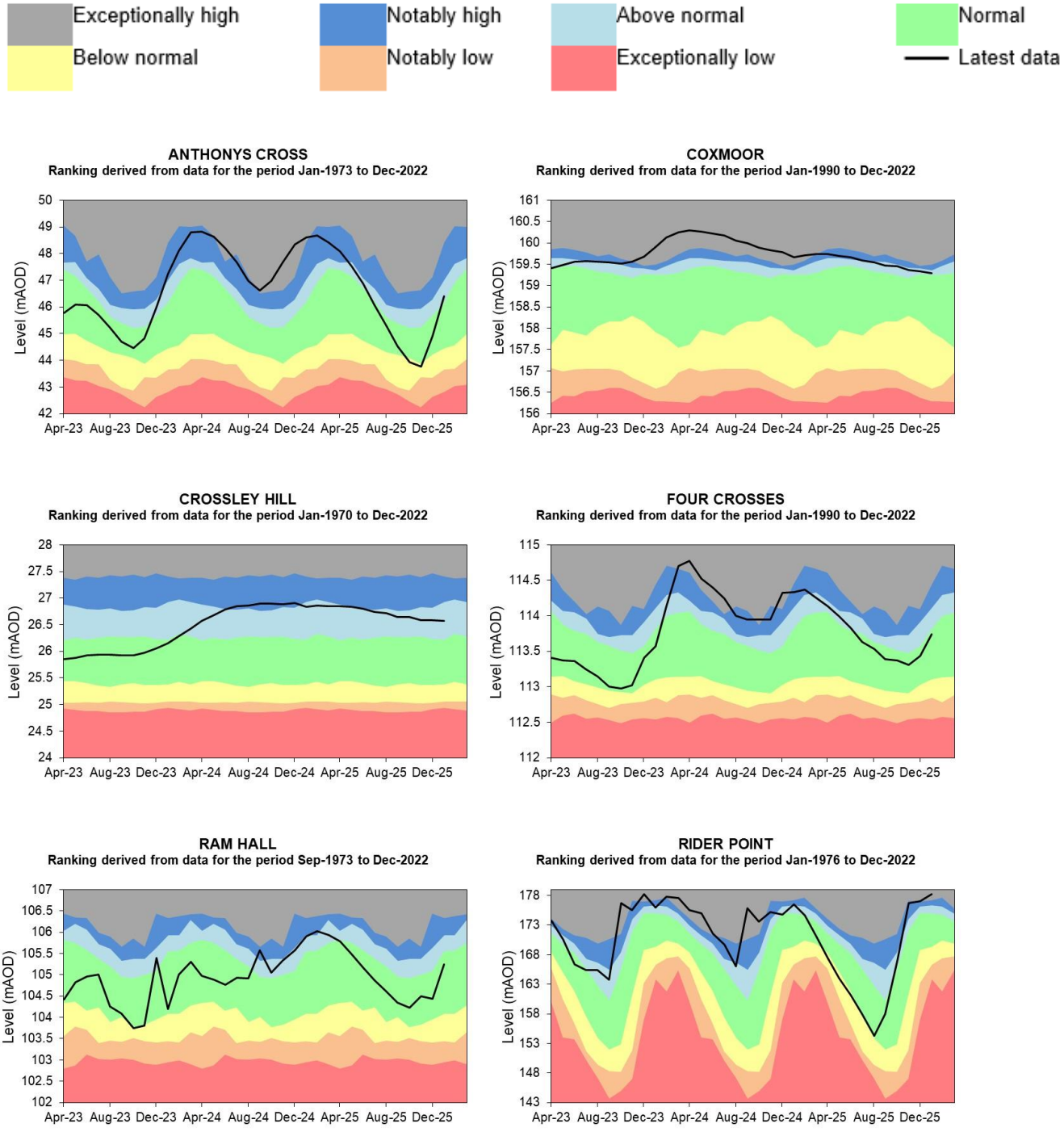
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of January 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic January levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information, including aquifer type.

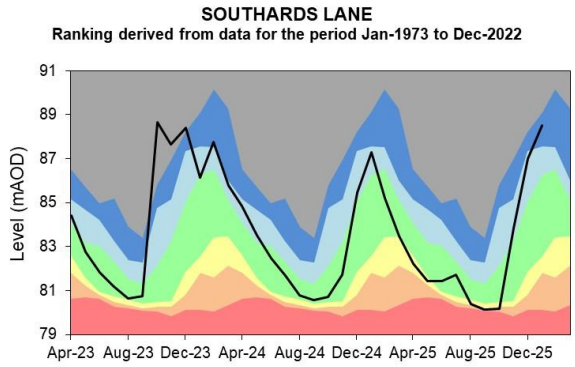


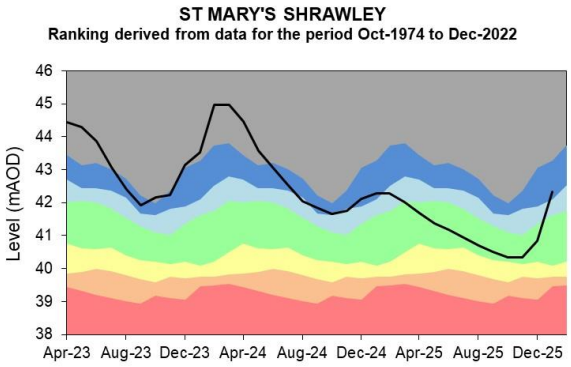
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

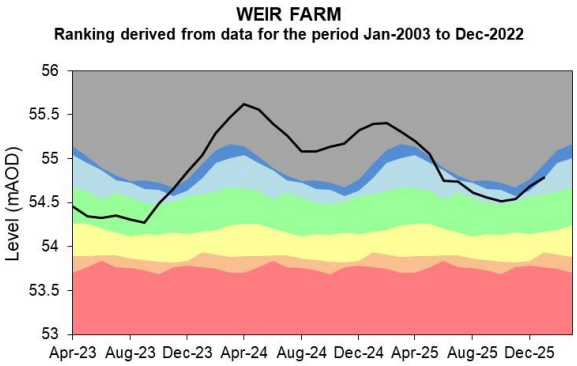
5.2 Groundwater level charts

Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 34 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels.





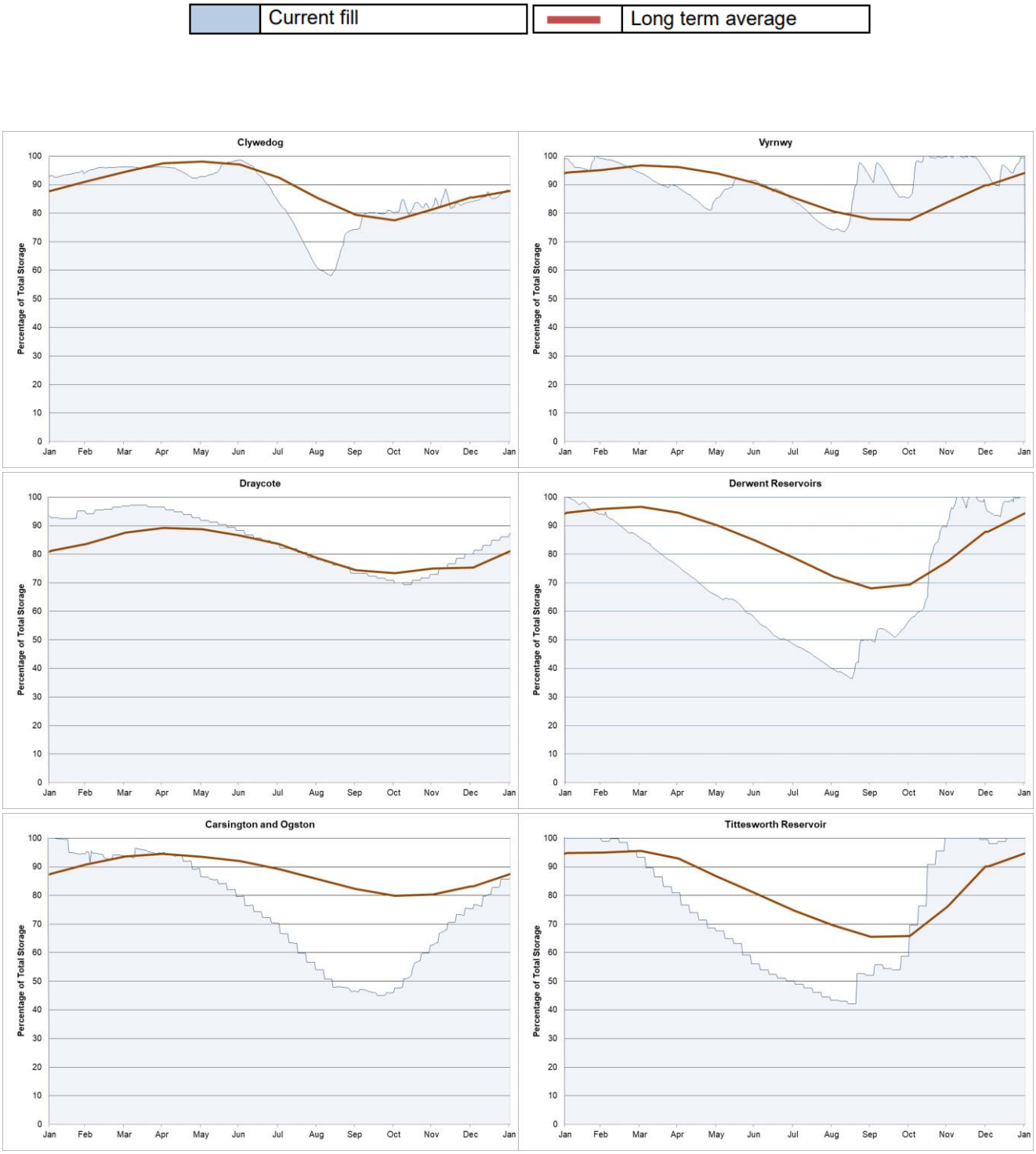


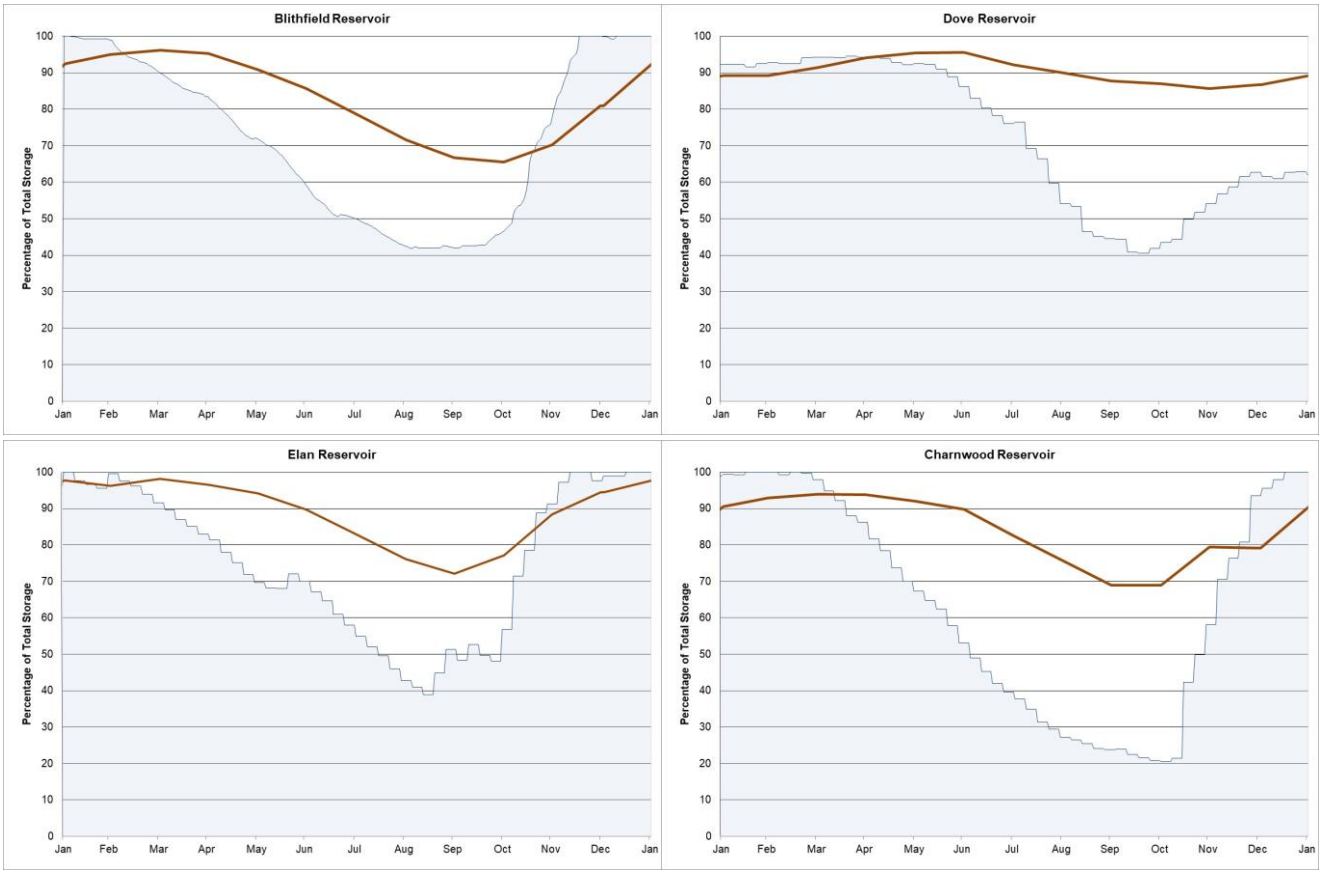


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to long term average stocks. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the regional values vary in length. Please see Section 7.4 for a map detailing the locality of the Midlands reservoirs reported on.





(Source: water companies).

7 Glossary

7.1 Terminology

Aquifer

A geological formation able to store and transmit water.

Areal average rainfall

The estimated average depth of rainfall over a defined area. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Artesian

The condition where the groundwater level is above ground surface but is prevented from rising to this level by an overlying continuous low permeability layer, such as clay.

Artesian borehole

Borehole where the level of groundwater is above the top of the borehole and groundwater flows out of the borehole when unsealed.

Cumecs

Cubic metres per second (m^3s^{-1}).

Effective rainfall

The rainfall available to percolate into the soil or produce river flow. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Field capacity

Soil at field capacity is holding all of the water which it can hold against gravity.

Flood alert and flood warning

Three levels of warnings may be issued by the Environment Agency. Flood alerts indicate flooding is possible. Flood warnings indicate flooding is expected. Severe flood warnings indicate severe flooding.

Groundwater

The water found in an aquifer.

Long term average (LTA)

The arithmetic mean calculated from the historic record, usually based on the period 1991 to 2020. However, the period used may vary by parameter being reported on (see figure captions for details).

mAOD

Metres above ordnance datum (mean sea level at Newlyn Cornwall).

MORECS

Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System. Met Office service providing real time calculation of evapotranspiration, soil moisture deficit and effective rainfall on a 40 by 40 km grid.

Naturalised flow

River flow with the impacts of artificial influences removed. Artificial influences may include abstractions, discharges, transfers, augmentation and impoundments.

NCIC

National Climate Information Centre. NCIC area monthly rainfall totals are derived using the Met Office 5 km gridded dataset, which uses rain gauge observations.

Recharge

The process of increasing the water stored in the saturated zone of an aquifer. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Reservoir gross capacity

The total capacity of a reservoir.

Reservoir live capacity

The capacity of the reservoir that is normally usable for storage to meet established reservoir operating requirements. This excludes any capacity not available for use (for example, storage held back for emergency services, operating agreements or physical restrictions). May also be referred to as ‘net’ or ‘deployable’ capacity.

Soil moisture deficit (SMD)

The difference between the amount of water actually in the soil and the amount of water the soil can hold. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

7.2 Categories

Exceptionally high

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

Notably high

Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Above normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Normal

Value likely to fall within this band 44% of the time.

Below normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Notably low

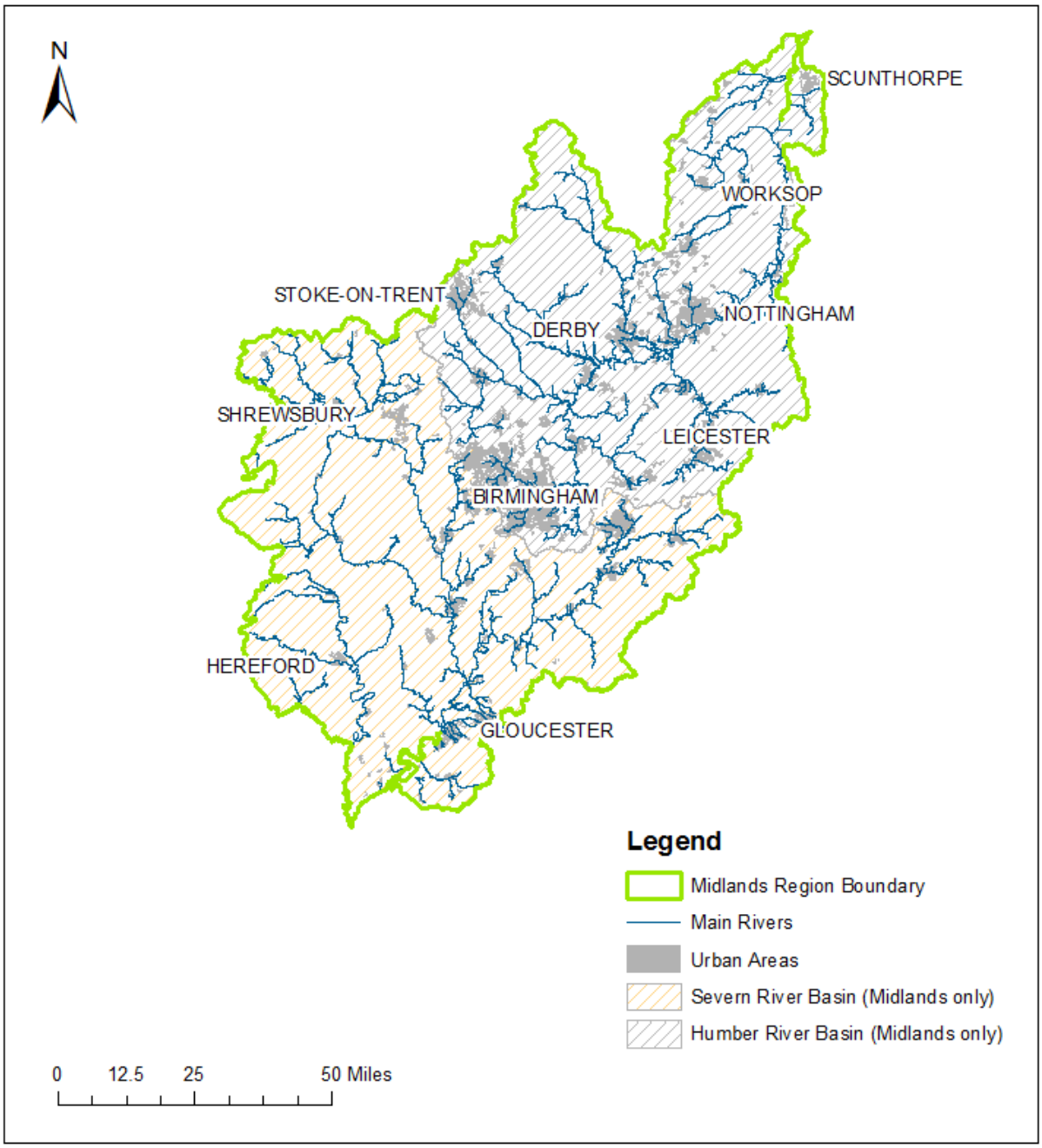
Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

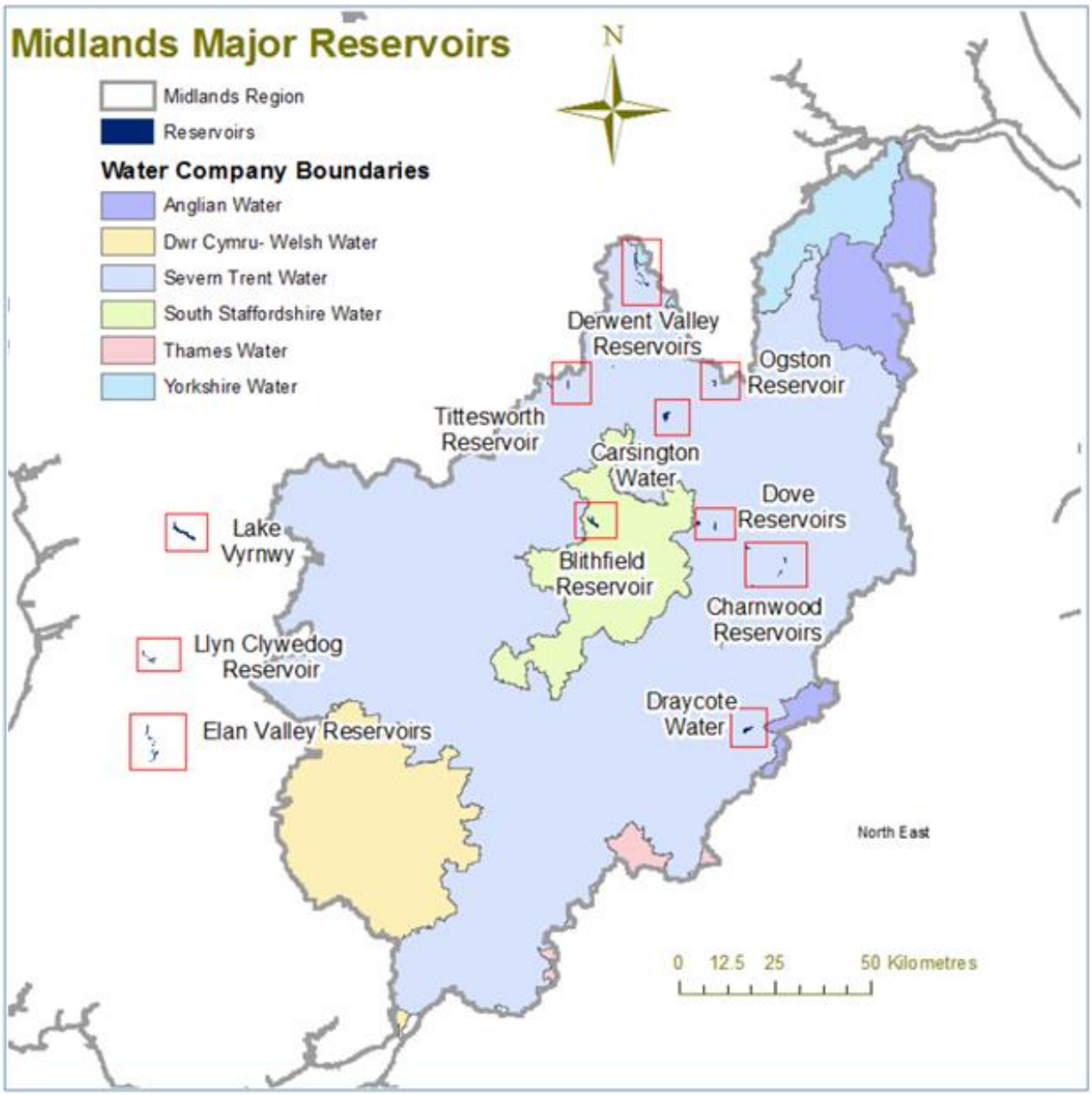
7.3 Midlands regional coverage

Figure 7.1: The Midlands regional boundary and the hydrological boundaries of the River Severn and River Trent.



7.4 Midlands major reservoirs

Figure 7.2: Location of major reservoirs in the Midlands.



8 Appendices

8.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Jan 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Jan 2026 band	Nov 2025 to January cumulative band	Aug 2025 to January cumulative band	Feb 2025 to January cumulative band
Avon To Evesham	161	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Above normal	Normal
Derwent (midlands)	155	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high	Normal
Dove	144	Above Normal	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Lower Severn Estuary	162	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Lower Trent	185	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Lower Wye	160	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Mid Severn	162	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Above normal	Normal
Shropshire Plains	160	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Soar	160	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Above normal	Normal

Hydrological area	Jan 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Jan 2026 band	Nov 2025 to January cumulative band	Aug 2025 to January cumulative band	Feb 2025 to January cumulative band
Tame	181	Exceptionally High	Exceptionally high	Notably high	Normal
Upper Trent	162	Notably High	Notably high	Notably high	Normal
Welsh Mountains	111	Normal	Above normal	Above normal	Normal

8.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Jan 2026 band	Dec 2025 band
Auckley	Torne	Torne	Above normal	Notably high
Bewdley	Severn	Severn Lower Mid	Normal	Notably high
Butts Bridge	Lugg	Lugg	Notably high	Notably high
Clifton Hall	River Mease	Mease	Notably high	Above normal
Deerhurst	Severn	Severn Lower	Above normal	Exceptionally high
Derby St. Marys	Derwent	Derwent Der to Markeaton confl.	Above normal	Notably high
Ebley Mill	Frome (Gloucs.)	Frome Gloucs.	Above normal	Exceptionally high
Evesham	Avon (Midlands)	Avon Warwks Lower	Notably high	Notably high
Great Bridgford	Sow	Sow Upper	Normal	Notably high
Kegworth	Soar	Soar to Kingston Brook confl.	Above normal	Above normal
Llanyblodwel	Tanat	Severn Upper River Tanat	Normal	Above normal
Marston On Dove	Dove (Midlands)	Dove Derb to Hilton Br confl.	Above normal	Above normal

Site name	River	Catchment	Jan 2026 band	Dec 2025 band
North Muskham	Trent	Trent to Cromwell	Above normal	Notably high
Redbrook	Wye (Herefordshire)	Wye H and W d s Lugg	Normal	Above normal
Stareton	Avon (Midlands)	Avon Warwks. Upper	Above normal	Notably high
Tenbury	Teme	Teme	Notably high	Notably high
Walcot	Tern	Tern	Notably high	Notably high
Wedderburn Bridge	Leadon	Leadon	No data	No data
Whatstandwell	Derwent	Derwent Derb to Amber confl.	Normal	Above normal
Worksop	Ryton	Ryton Upper to Oldcoates Dyke	Exceptionally high	Notably high
Yoxall	Trent	Trent to Tame Mease confl.	Above normal	Notably high

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Jan 2026 band	End of Dec 2025 band
Anthony's Cross	Severn Vale Permo Triassic Sandstone	Normal	Above normal
Coxmoor	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Above normal	Above normal
Crossley Hill	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Above normal	Above normal
Four Crosses	Permo Triassic Sandstone	Normal	Normal
Ram Hall, Meriden	Permo Carboniferous Sandstones and Mudstones	Normal	Normal
Rider Point Via Gellia	Carboniferous Limestone	Exceptionally high	Exceptionally high
Southards Lane, Bolsover	Magnesian Limestone	Notably high	Above normal
St Mary's Church, Shrawley	Triassic Sandstone	Normal	Notably high
Weir Farm	Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation	Above normal	Notably high