# Monthly water situation report: Kent and South London Area

## 1 Summary - April 2026

Kent South London and East Sussex (KSLES) area received an average rainfall total of 4mm in April, which was 10% of the long-term average (LTA). Rainfall was predominantly exceptionally low in the area, with notably low rainfall recorded in one western catchment. Soil Moisture Deficits (SMDs) across the KSLES area increased to 79mm in April. Effective rainfall recorded in April was 0% of the LTA. Monthly mean river flows decreased at all key indicator sites in April. River flows varied across the area, ranging from exceptionally low to above normal. Groundwater levels across the KSLES started to decrease at all indicator sites during April. Levels across all 5 reservoirs decreased during April and ranged from notably low to normal.

### 1.1 Rainfall

During April, the KSLES area received 10% of the LTA rainfall for the time of year, based on a whole-area average. Rainfall received in the KSLES area ranged from exceptionally low in 13 out of 14 catchments to notably low in the Lower Mole. The percentage of LTA rainfall received ranged from 6 percent in the Darent catchment in the centre of the patch, to 15 percent in the Lower Mole catchment in the West. The highest daily rainfall total of 12.5mm was observed on day 13 of the month at Northfleet STW RG in the Darent.

In April, the top 5 highest rainfall days were 13, 12, 18, 15, and 14 April. There were 14 dry days in April that recorded rainfall less than 0.2mm. The middle of the month saw small localised showers while the beginning and end of the month were predominantly dry. Overall, April was the sixth driest on record since records began in 1871.

### 1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

SMDs across the KSLES area continued to increase during April, recording a deficit of 79mm, with the LTA being 40mm. This reflects the exceptionally low rainfall experienced throughout the month. Effective rainfall recorded in April was 0% of the LTA. While this indicates continued soil drying, increasing SMDs are typical for this time of year as soils naturally dry through spring. The higher deficit is largely attributable to an unusually dry April rather than a typical seasonal behaviour.

## 1.3 River flows

- Exceptionally low river flows were recorded at the River Ravensbourne at Catford.
- Notably low flows were observed at the River Mole at Dorking, the River Eden at Vexour and Penshurst, and the River Teise at Stonebridge.
- Below normal flows were seen at the River Medway at Teston and in the East Stour at South Willesborough, both of which are situated in the Greensand aquifer.
- Normal flows were recorded at the River Wandle at Connolly's Mill, the River Darent at Hawley, and the Stour at Horton.
- Above normal flows were observed at the River Dour at Crabble.

The dry April and significantly low rainfall are reflected in the reduced flows within the clay and Greensand catchments, while flows in the chalk catchments at Crabble, Horton and Hawley remain supported by elevated base flow contributions from the underlying chalk geology.

## 1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels across the KSLES area are now falling at all 7 groundwater level sites. Riverhead and Wolverton began decreasing in March while the remaining sites started to fall in April. Levels across the catchment ranged from normal to above normal. Groundwater levels in the Chalk aquifer sites at Chipstead, Sweeps Lane, Riddles Lane and Fleete Reservoir remained normal, while Little Bucket and Wolverton in the Southeast recorded above normal groundwater levels. In the case of Wolverton, this represents a fall from notably high levels last month to an above-normal range this month. In the Lower Greensand aquifer, levels at Riverhead are now in the normal range. The fall in groundwater levels is consistent with the lack of effective rainfall in March and April and the SMDs registered by the end of during April.

## 1.5 Reservoir stocks

In the month of April, all 5 reservoirs saw a decrease in water levels. By the end of April, the reservoirs held the following live storage capacities and LTA class:

- Bewl –97% Normal
- Darwell –77% Notably low
- Bough Beech – 97% Normal
- Powdermill – 84% Notably low
- Weir Wood – 99% Normal

## 1.6 Environmental impact

Widespread hands-off flow restrictions were applied to abstractors in the Medway catchment during early April, with further hands-off flow restrictions applied to some abstractors in the Wye catchment towards the end of April.

There were no fluvial or groundwater flooding alerts or warnings issued during April. The East Kent groundwater flooding alert was removed on 10 April.

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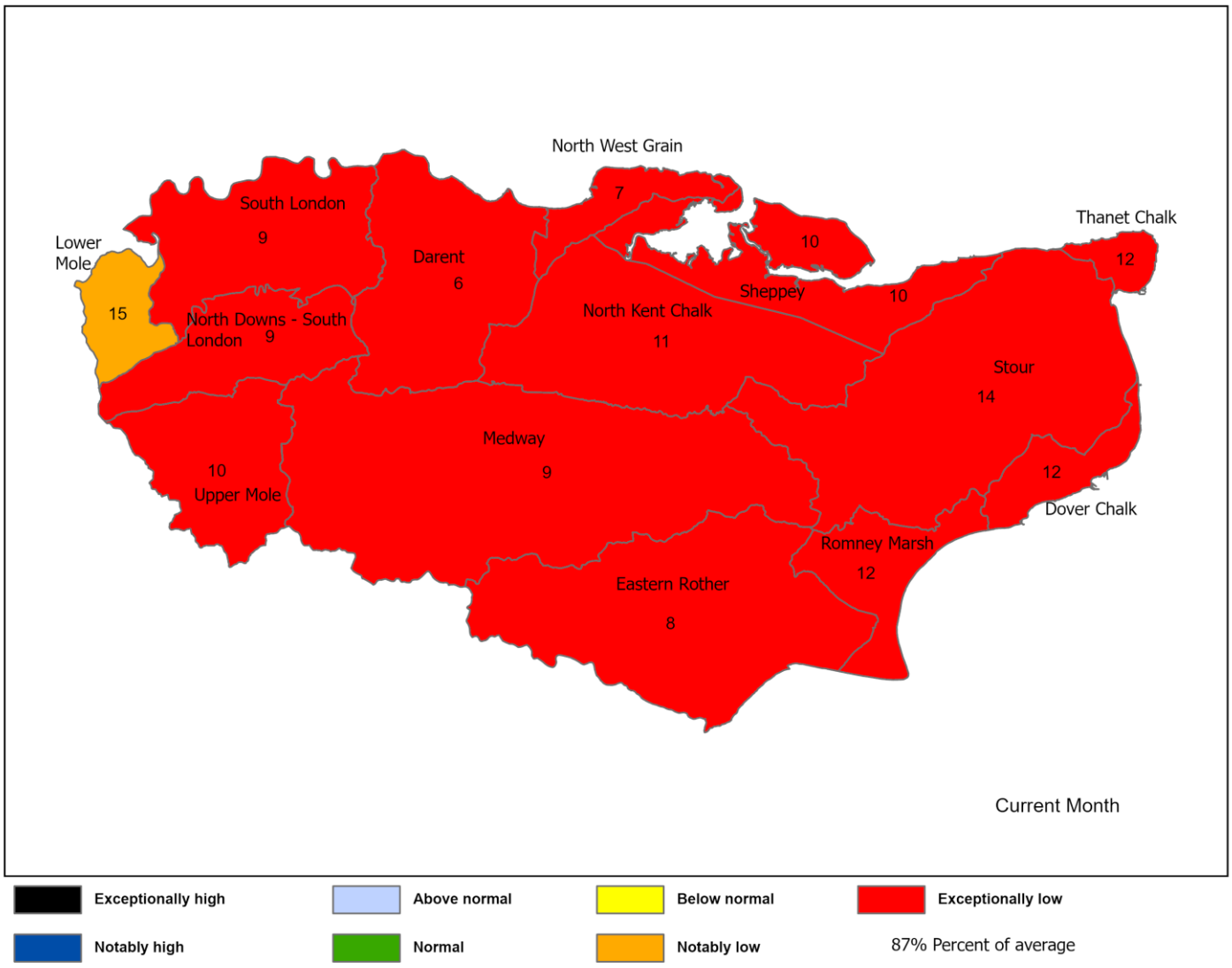
# 2 Rainfall

## 2.1 Rainfall map one

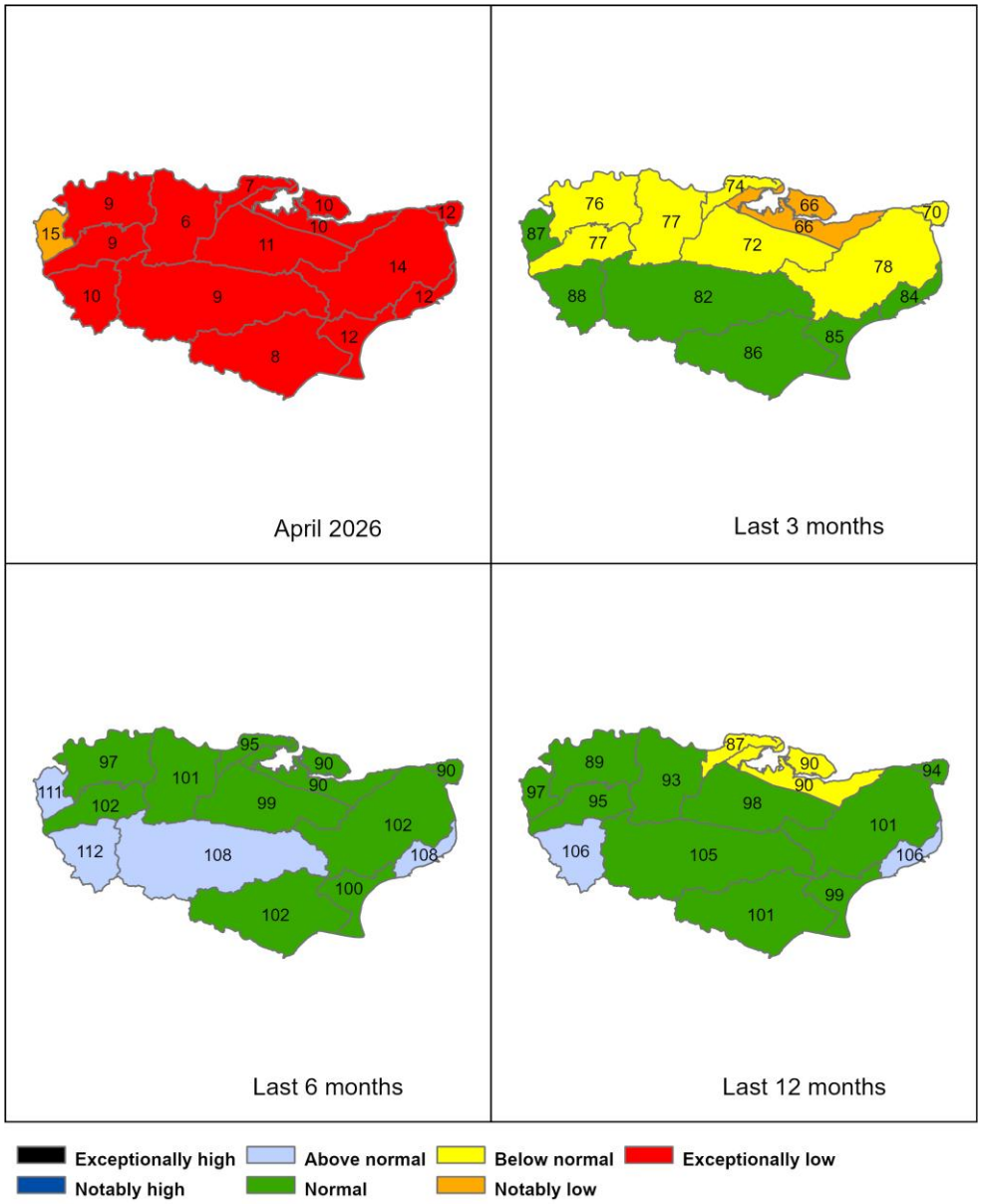
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across Kent and South London for the current month (up to 30 April 2026), classed relative of historic totals. The percentage of average uses the period of 1991 – 2020. Table available in the appendices with more detailed information.




HadUK data for October 2023 onwards, based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Includes material based on Ordnance Survey 1:50 000 maps with the permission of the controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2026.

## 2.2 Rainfall map two

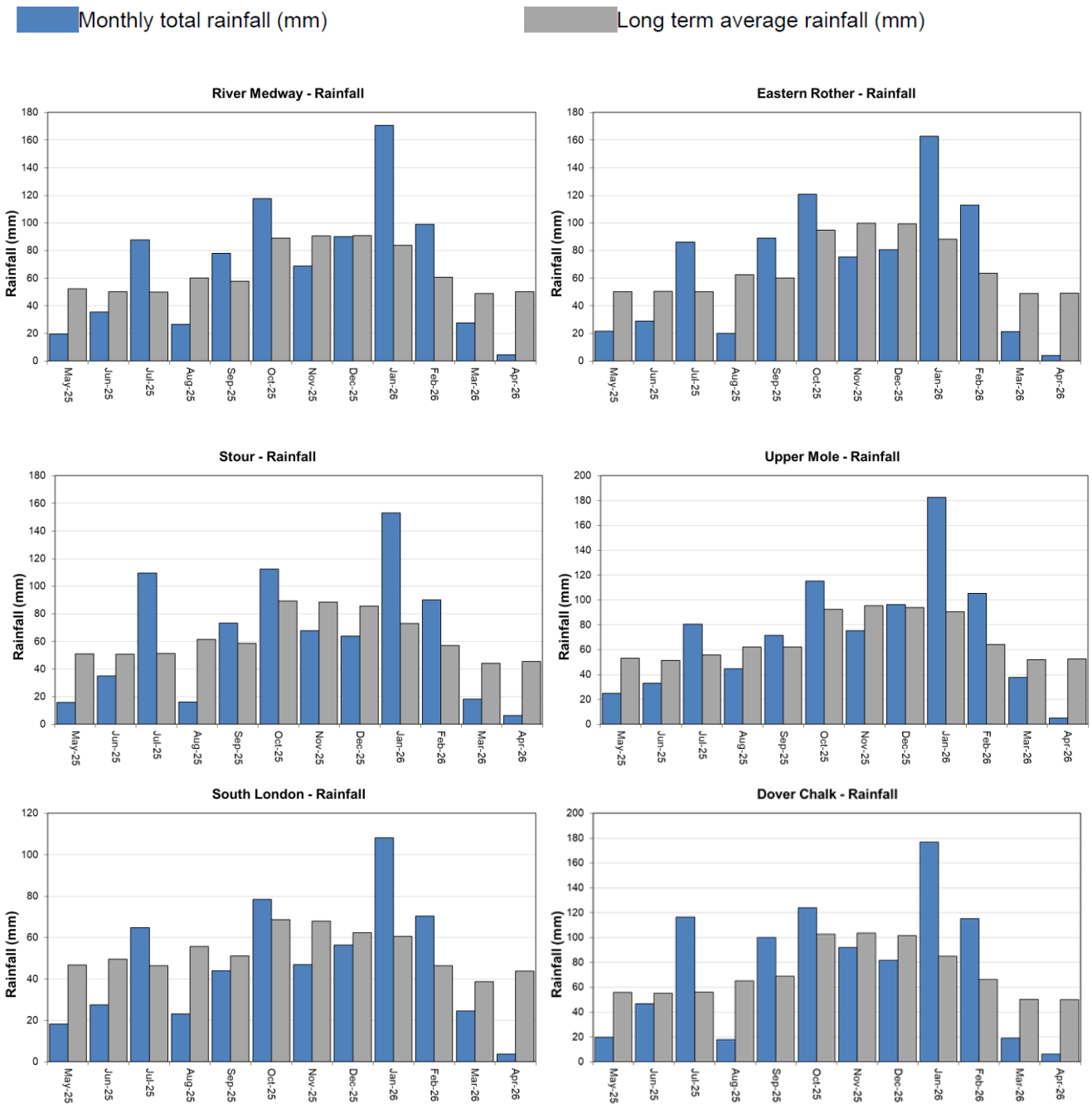
Figure 2.2: Total rainfall for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 30 April 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months), classed relative of historic totals. The percentage of average uses the period of 1991 – 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

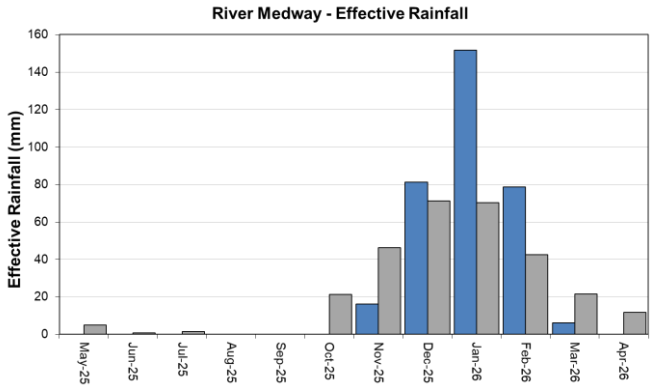


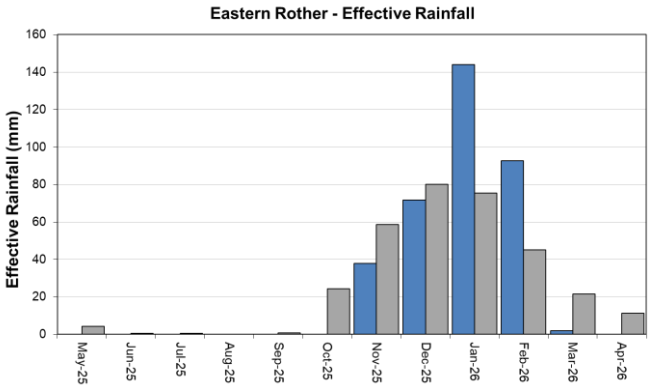

HadUK data for October 2023 onwards, based the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Includes material based on Ordnance Survey 1:50 000 maps with the permission of the controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2026.

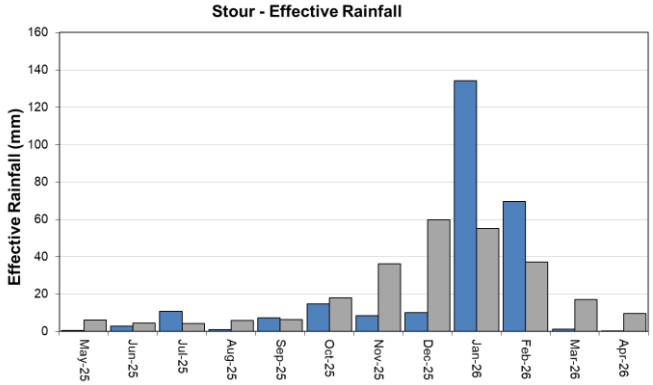
## 2.3 Rainfall and effective rainfall charts

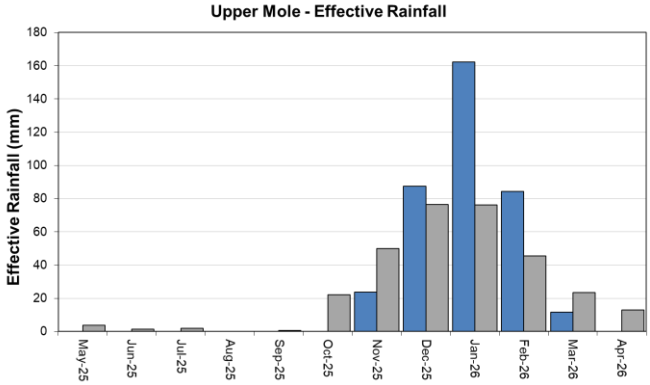
Figure 2.3: Monthly rainfall and effective rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average (LTA) for a selection of areal units. HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). EA effective rainfall data (Source EA Soil Moisture Model).

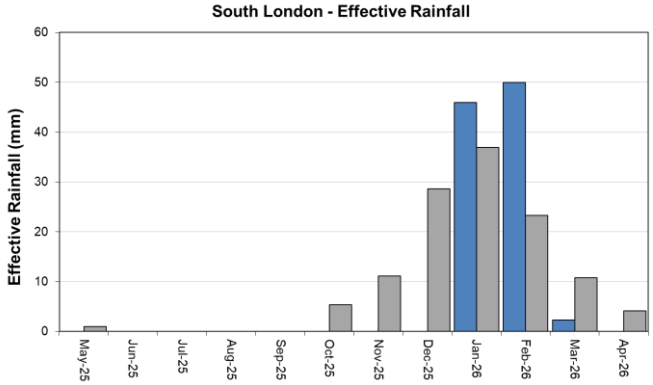


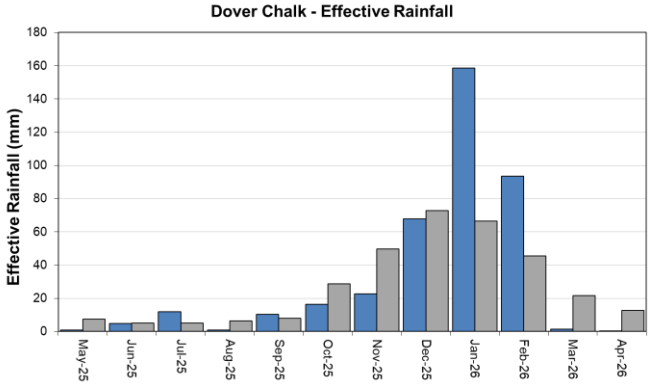

River Medway - Effective Rainfall
Effective Rainfall (mm)
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26


Eastern Rother - Effective Rainfall
Effective Rainfall (mm)
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26


Stour - Effective Rainfall
Effective Rainfall (mm)
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26


Upper Mole - Effective Rainfall
Effective Rainfall (mm)
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
180
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26


South London - Effective Rainfall
Effective Rainfall (mm)
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26


Dover Chalk - Effective Rainfall
Effective Rainfall (mm)
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
180
May-25
Jun-25
Jul-25
Aug-25
Sep-25
Oct-25
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26

## 2.4 Rainfall and effective rainfall table

Figure 2.4: This is a second estimate of areal rainfall and effective rainfall (percolation or runoff) for a selection of the hydrological areas across the Kent and South London area. There may be significant variation within each area which must be considered when interpreting these data. When additional meteorological data is available estimates are revised which will affect the period totals in section 2.5.

| Number | Hydrological Area | Rainfall (mm) 30 day Total | April % LTA | Effective Rainfall (mm) 30 day total | April % LTA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6230TH | North Downs - South London (W) | 5 | 8% | 0 | 0% |
| 6505TH | Upper Mole | 5 | 9% | 0 | 0% |
| 6508TH | South London | 4 | 9% | 0 | 0% |
| 6706So | Darent | 3 | 6% | 0 | 0% |
| 6707So | North Kent Chalk | 5 | 11% | 0 | 2% |
| 6708So | Stour | 6 | 14% | 0 | 2% |
| 6709So | Dover Chalk | 6 | 12% | 0 | 0% |
| 6710So | Thanet Chalk | 5 | 12% | 0 | 0% |
| 6809So | Medway | 4 | 9% | 0 | 0% |
| 6810So | Eastern Rother | 4 | 8% | 0 | 0% |
| 6811So | Romney Marsh | 5 | 12% | 0 | 0% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6812So | North West Grain | 3 | 7% | 0 | 0% |
| 6813So | Sheppey | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% |
| | Kent & South London Average | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% |

HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

EA effective rainfall data (Source EA Soil Moisture Model)

## 2.5 Seasonal summary table of rainfall and effective rainfall

Figure 2.5: This is a seasonal estimate of areal rainfall and effective rainfall (percolation or runoff) for a selection of the hydrological areas across the Kent and South London area, expressed as totals and as a percentage of the LTA. There may be significant variation within each area which must be considered when interpreting these data. When additional meteorological data is available estimates are revised which will affect the period totals.

Summer period 01/04/2026 to 30/04/2026

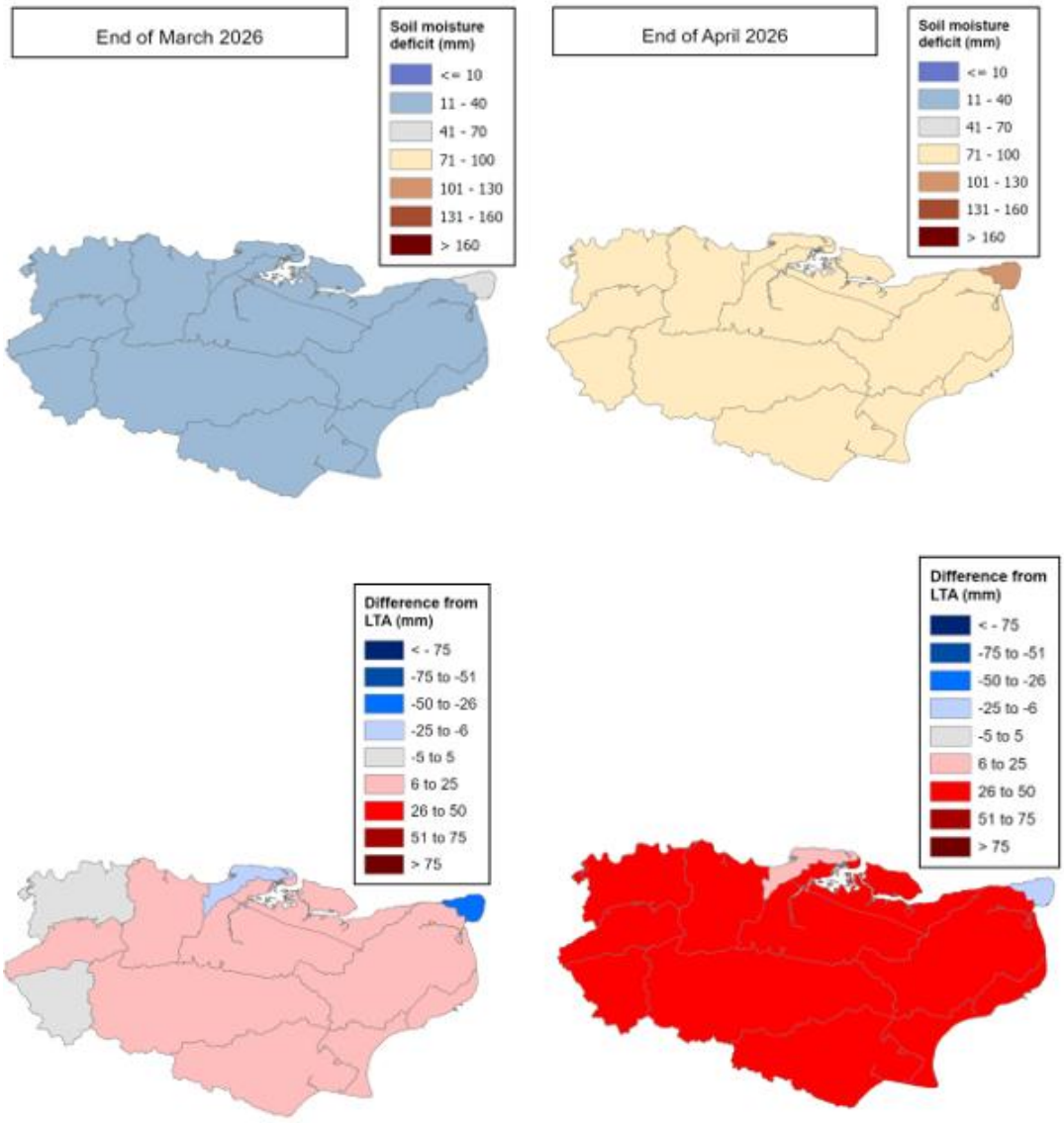
| Number | Hydrological Area | Seasonal Rainfall (mm) Total | % LTA | Seasonal Effective Rainfall (mm) Total | % LTA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6230TH | North Downs - South London (W) | 5 | 8% | 0 | 0% |
| 6505TH | Upper Mole | 5 | 9% | 0 | 0% |
| 6508TH | South London | 4 | 9% | 0 | 0% |
| 6706So | Darent | 3 | 6% | 0 | 0% |
| 6707So | North Kent Chalk | 5 | 11% | 0 | 2% |
| 6708So | Stour | 6 | 14% | 0 | 2% |
| 6709So | Dover Chalk | 6 | 12% | 0 | 0% |
| 6710So | Thanet Chalk | 5 | 12% | 0 | 0% |
| 6809So | Medway | 4 | 9% | 0 | 0% |
| 6810So | Eastern Rother | 4 | 8% | 0 | 0% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6811So | Romney Marsh | 5 | 12% | 0 | 0% |
| 6812So | North West Grain | 3 | 7% | 0 | 0% |
| 6813So | Sheppey | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% |
| | Kent & South London Average | 4 | 10% | 0 | 0% |

# 3 Soil moisture deficit

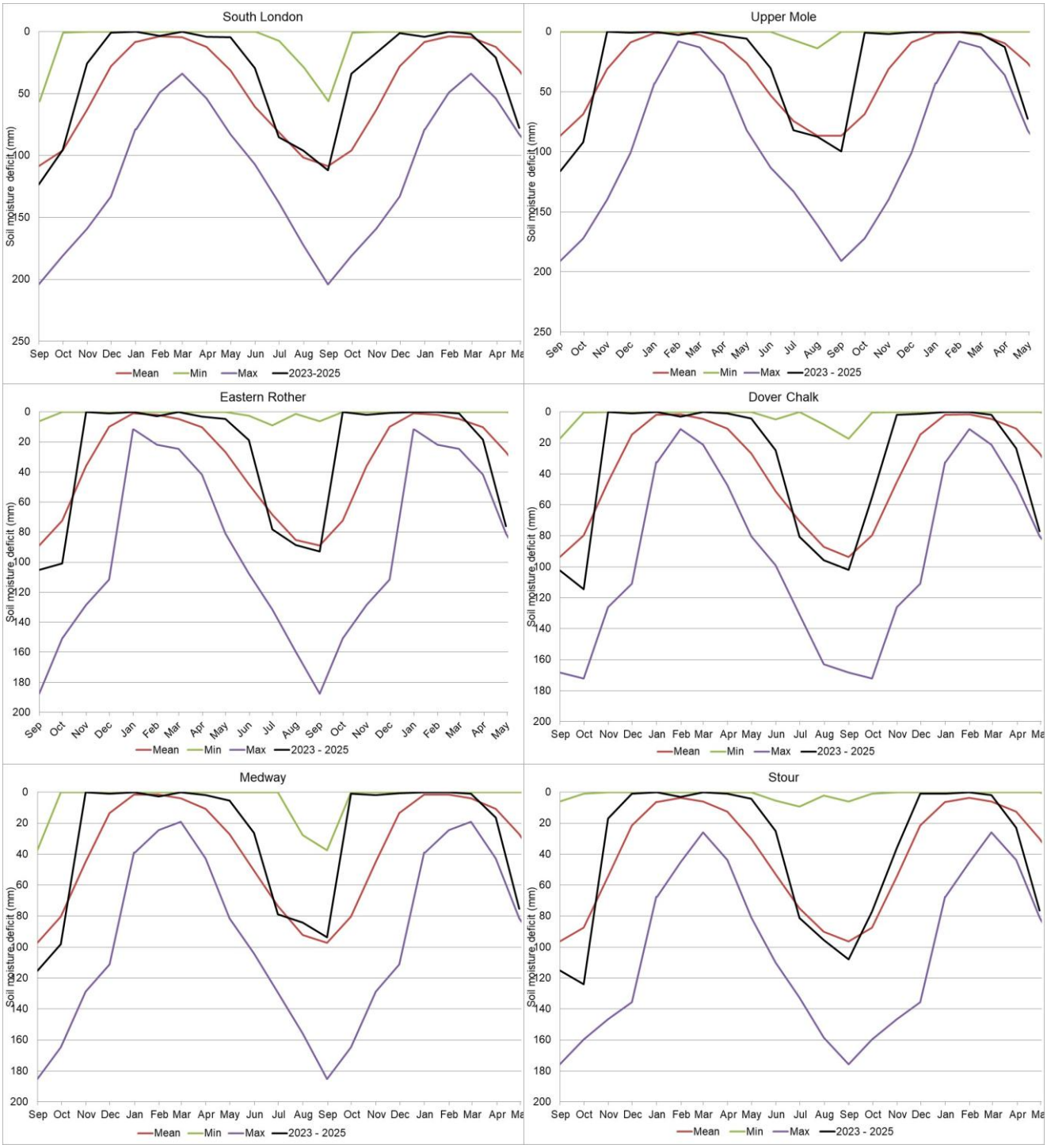
## 3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 31 March (left panel) and 30 April 2026 (right panel). Top row shows actual soil moisture deficits (mm) and bottom row shows the difference (mm) of the actual from the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. EA Soil Moisture Deficit data (Source EA Soil Moisture Model).



## 3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to maximum, minimum, and 1991 to 2020 long term average. EA soil moisture deficit data (Source EA Soil Moisture Model).



## 3.3 Soil moisture deficit table

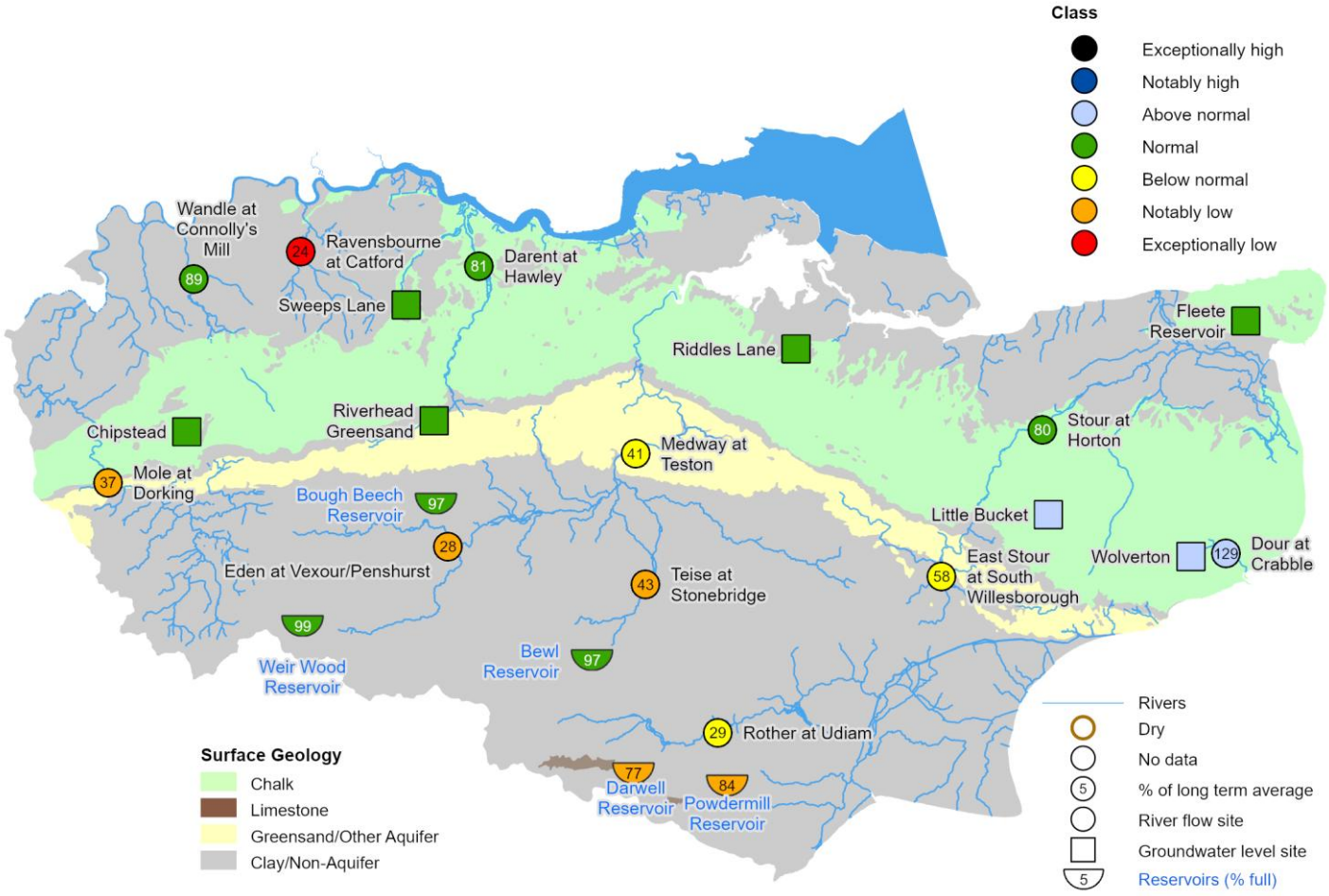
Figure 3.3: This is a second estimate of soil moisture deficit for the hydrological areas across the Kent and South London area. There may be significant variation within each area which must be considered when interpreting these data. EA soil moisture deficit data (Source EA Soil Moisture Model).

| Number | Hydrological Area | SMD (mm) Day 30 | End April LTA |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6230TH | North Downs - South London (W) | 75 | 27 |
| 6505TH | Upper Mole | 72 | 26 |
| 6508TH | South London | 78 | 38 |
| 6706So | Darent | 77 | 31 |
| 6707So | North Kent Chalk | 76 | 29 |
| 6708So | Stour | 76 | 30 |
| 6709So | Dover Chalk | 77 | 28 |
| 6710So | Thanet Chalk | 109 | 123 |
| 6809So | Medway | 75 | 26 |
| 6810So | Eastern Rother | 76 | 26 |
| 6811So | Romney Marsh | 78 | 30 |
| 6812So | North West Grain | 80 | 56 |
| 6813So | Sheppey | 81 | 46 |
| | Kent & South London Average | 79 | 40 |

# 4 River flows, groundwater levels and reservoir stocks

## 4.1 River flows, groundwater levels and reservoir stocks map

Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flows* ** for indicator sites for April 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average (period 1992 – 2020) and classed relative to an analysis of historic April monthly means. End of month groundwater levels for indicator sites for April 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic April levels. Tables available in the appendices with detailed information. End of month levels for reservoirs for April 2026, expressed as percent full. (Source: Water Companies).

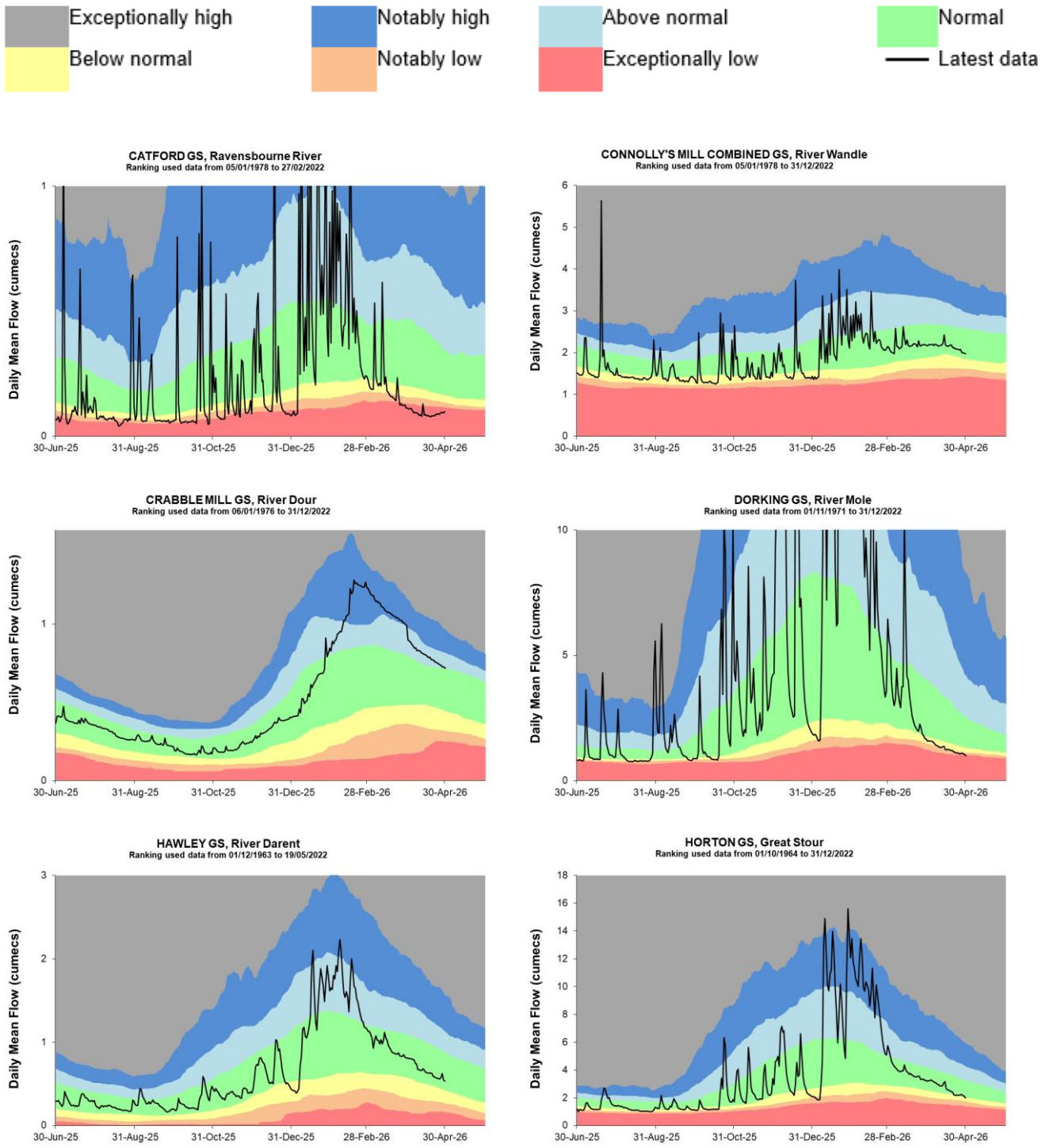


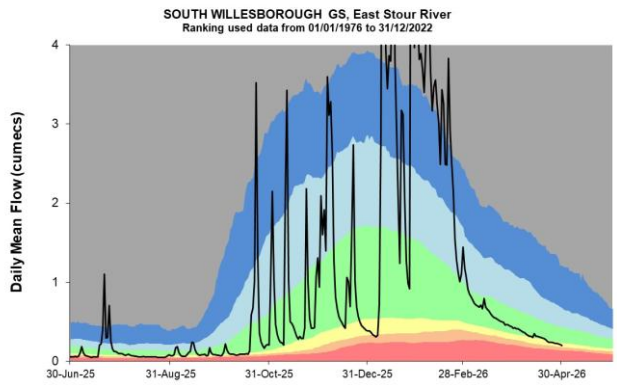

*Flows at gauging stations in the Medway catchment might be affected by upstream reservoir releases

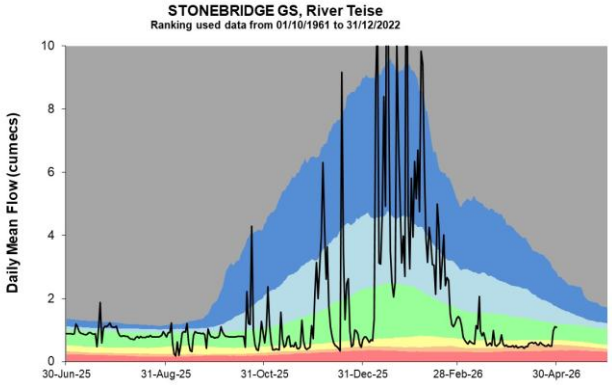
**Weirwood Reservoir is currently offline

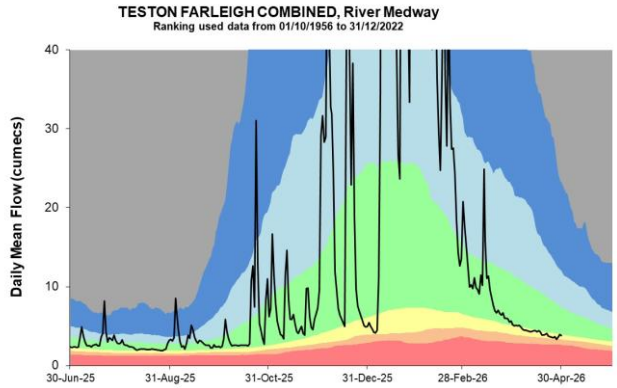
## 4.2 River flow charts

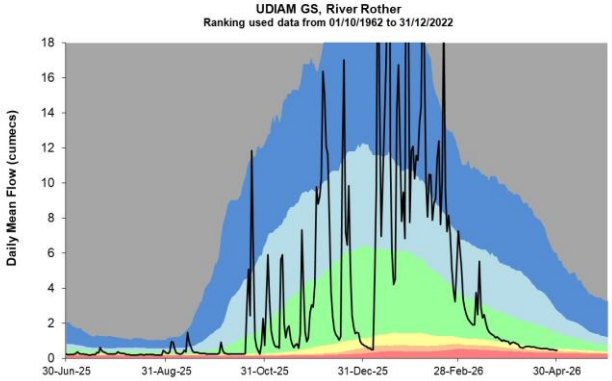
Figure 4.1: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.

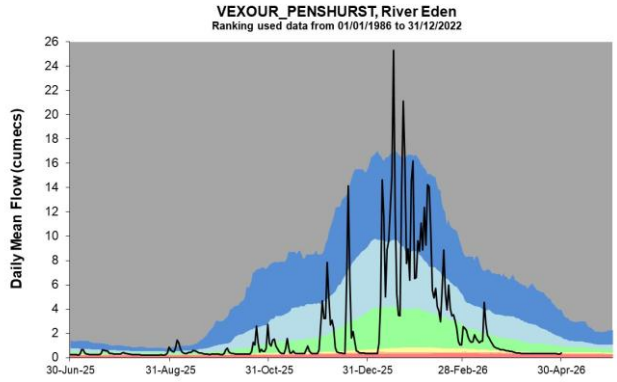




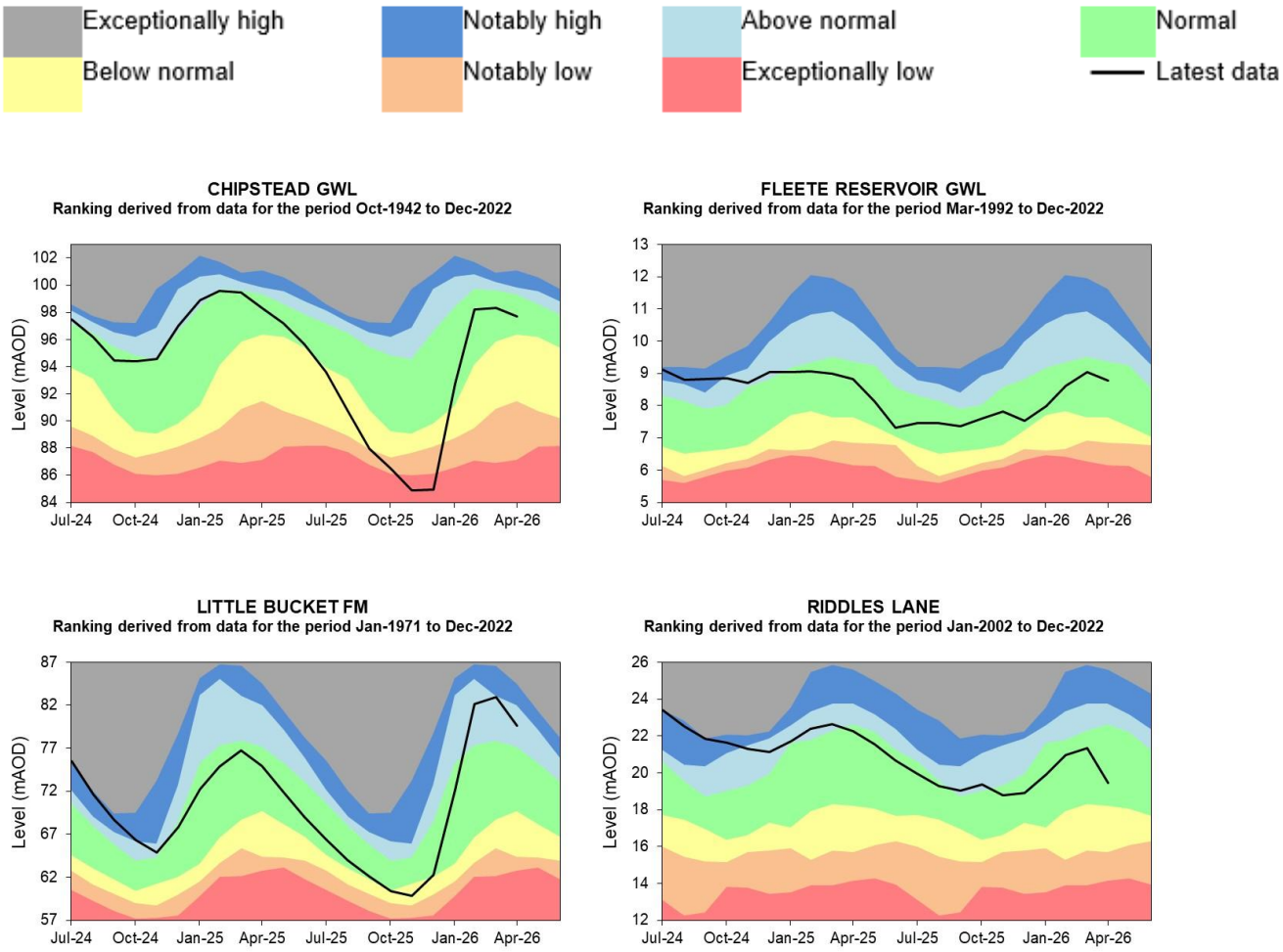



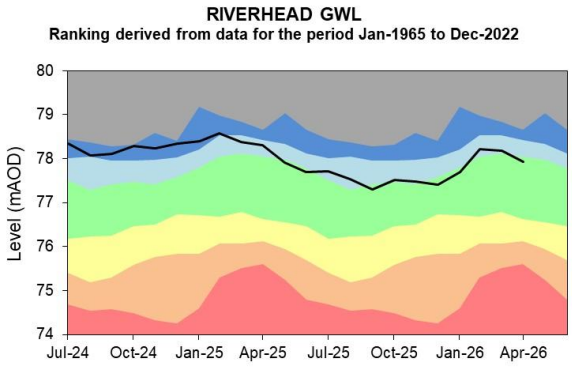

Source: Environment Agency.

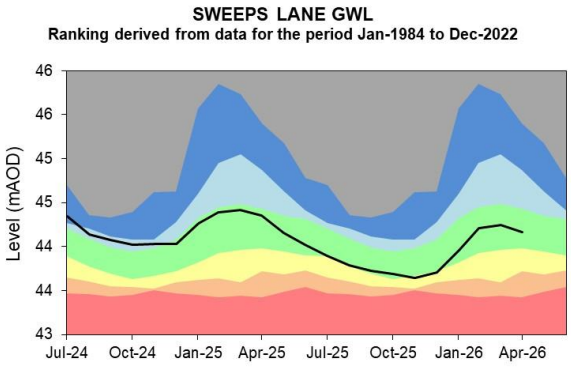
# 5 Groundwater levels

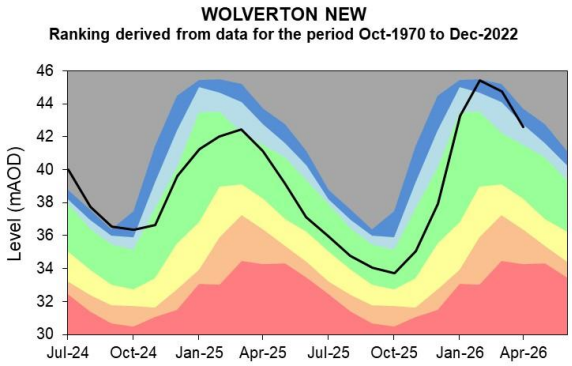
## 5.1 Groundwater level charts

Figure 5.1: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 22 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.





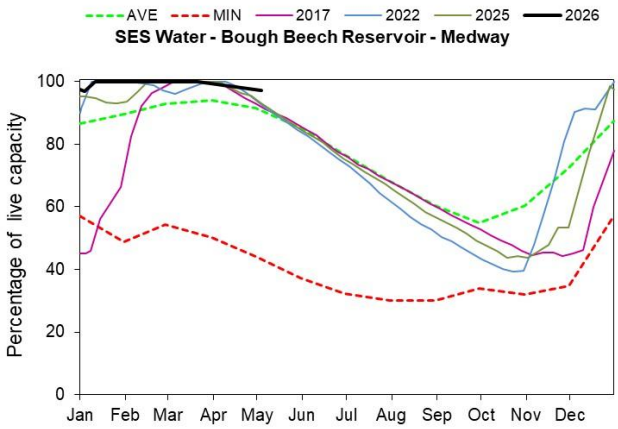



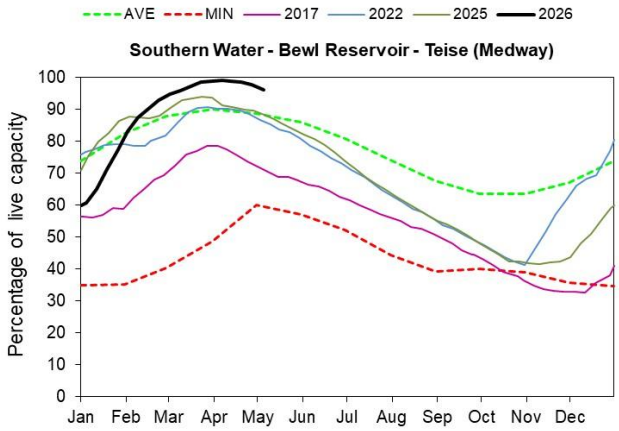

Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

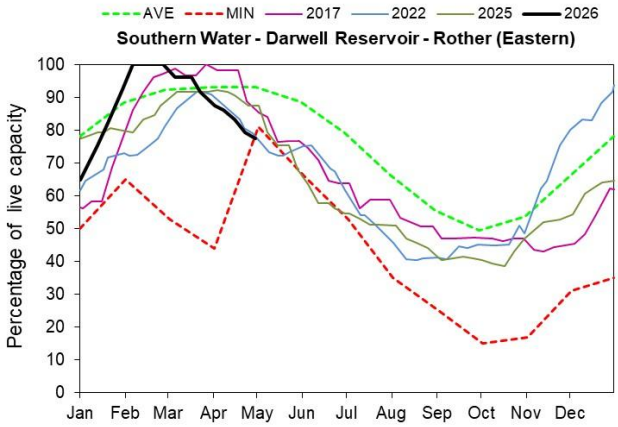
# 6 Reservoir stocks

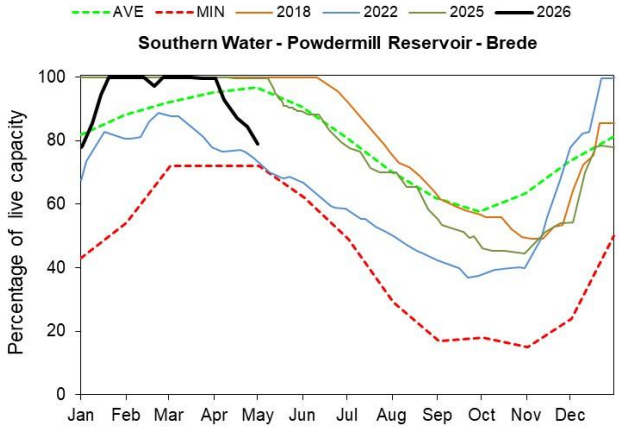
## 6.1 Reservoir stocks charts

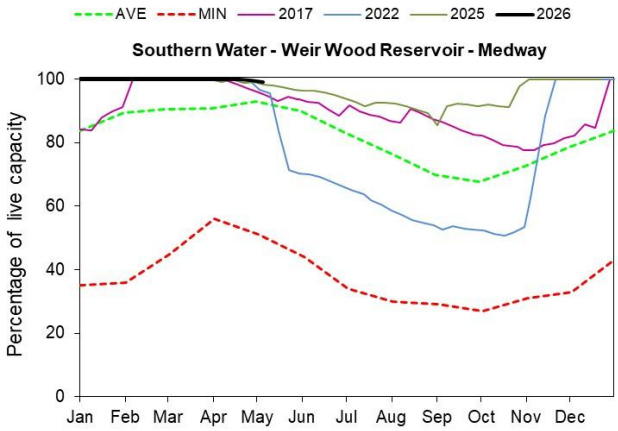
Figure 7.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to long term maximum, minimum and average stocks. (Source: Water Companies). Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the regional values vary in length.



# 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).

**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.

# 8 Appendices

## 8.1 Rainfall table

| Hydrological area | Apr 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020 | Apr 2026 band | Feb 2026 to April cumulative band | Nov 2025 to April cumulative band | May 2025 to April cumulative band |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Downs - South London | 9 | Exceptionally Low | Below normal | Normal | Normal |
| Upper Mole | 10 | Exceptionally Low | Normal | Above normal | Above normal |
| South London | 9 | Exceptionally Low | Below normal | Normal | Normal |
| River Darent | 6 | Exceptionally Low | Below normal | Normal | Normal |
| North Kent Chalk | 11 | Exceptionally Low | Below normal | Normal | Normal |
| Stour | 14 | Exceptionally Low | Below normal | Normal | Normal |
| Dover Chalk | 12 | Exceptionally Low | Normal | Above normal | Above normal |
| Thanet Chalk | 12 | Exceptionally Low | Below normal | Normal | Normal |
| River Medway | 9 | Exceptionally Low | Normal | Above normal | Normal |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Eastern Rother | 8 | Exceptionally Low | Normal | Normal | Normal |
| Romney Marsh | 12 | Exceptionally Low | Normal | Normal | Normal |
| North West Grain | 7 | Exceptionally Low | Below normal | Normal | Below normal |
| Sheppy | 10 | Exceptionally Low | Notably low | Normal | Below normal |

## 8.2 River flows table

| Site name | River | Catchment | Apr 2026 band | Mar 2026 band |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Catford Gs | River Ravensbourne | Ravensbourne | Exceptionally low | Notably low |
| Connolly's Mill Combined Gs | River Wandle | Wandle | Normal | Normal |
| Crabble Mill Gs | River Dour | Dour | Above normal | Above normal |
| Dorking Gs | River Mole | Mole Surrey | Notably low | Normal |
| Hawley Gs | River Darent and Cray | Darent and Cray | Normal | Normal |
| Horton Gs | Great Stour River | Great Stour | Normal | Normal |
| South Willesborough Gs | East Stour River | East Stour | Below normal | Normal |
| Stonebridge Gs | River Teise | Teise | Notably low | Below normal |
| Teston Farleigh Combined | River Medway | Medway (Middle) | Below normal | Normal |
| Udiam Gs | River Rother | Rother (Kent) | Below normal | Normal |
| Vexour_penshurst | River Eden | Eden (Kent) | Notably low | Normal |

## Groundwater table

| Site name | Aquifer | End of Apr 2026 band | End of Mar 2026 band |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fleete Reservoir Gwl | Isle Of Thanet Chalk | Normal | Normal |
| Chipstead Gwl | Epsom North Downs Chalk | Normal | Normal |
| Little Bucket Fm | East Kent Chalk - Stour | Above normal | Above normal |
| Riddles Lane | North Kent Swale Chalk | Normal | Normal |
| Riverhead Gwl | Kent Greensand | Normal | Above normal |
| Sweeps Lane Gwl | West Kent Chalk | Normal | Normal |
| Wolverton New | East Kent Chalk - Stour | Above normal | Notably high |