

Monthly water situation report: Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area

1 Summary - August 2026

August 2026 averaged 65mm of rain across Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, 105% of the long-term average and normal for the time of year. Much of this rainfall fell in the last two weeks of the month and there was a strong response in the soil moisture deficit which decreased by 33.2mm through August. Despite the rainfall, river flows remain low and nine of the twelve key indicator sites had monthly mean flows below normal or lower. Groundwater levels also continue to decline. Reservoir stocks reduced by an average of 7.8% and all five sites remain below their respective target operating curves as demand remains high.

1.1 Rainfall

65mm of rain fell across Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire (LNA) through August 2026, 105% of the long-term average (LTA). All six hydrological areas recorded normal rainfall for August, between 81% LTA in Upper Welland and Nene and 121% LTA in Louth Grimsby and Ancholme. August 2026 contrasts with the previous few months in which rainfall totals have been below normal, or worse, and it is the first month in which most hydrological areas received greater than 100% LTA rainfall since February.

When looking across the last three months, the incredibly dry July means rainfall totals in five of the six hydrological areas are below normal, and notably low in Upper Welland and Nene. 114mm of rain fell from June to August across LNA, just 63% of the LTA. Observing the data over the past six months further demonstrates the dry conditions; 2026 experienced the sixth driest March to August since records began in 1871. Four of the six hydrological areas experienced exceptionally low rainfall over that period, with the Upper Welland and Nene having the fourth driest March to August and Lower Welland and Nene the fifth driest. LNA received just 57% of the LTA from March to August, with rainfall totals across the six hydrological areas ranging from 52% to 65% of the LTA.

Despite the dry six months, 107% of the LTA rainfall was recorded in LNA from September 2025 to August 2026. Four of the six hydrological areas recorded normal rainfall, while Louth Grimsby and Ancholme and Witham to Chapel Hill had above normal rainfall during this period. The contrast in rainfall across the area during the last six months and twelve months highlights the very wet winter that has been balanced out by a very dry spring and summer.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

The soil moisture deficit (SMD) significantly reduced in response to the rainfall towards the end of August and averaged 100.8mm across LNA by 1 September, normal for the time of year. The SMD had reduced by 33.2mm compared to the deficit at the end of July, when it had been classified as exceptionally high, and all six hydrological areas saw a sharp reduction in their respective SMD. There is clear east-west divide in SMD, with the three hydrological areas to the west having an SMD between 88mm and 95mm, while the three to the east have an SMD between 113mm and 129mm by the end of the month.

All six hydrological areas ended July with an SMD between 26mm and 50mm greater than the LTA. However, by the end of August, three of the areas had an SMD within 5mm of the LTA and the Louth Grimsby and Ancholme had an SMD between 6mm and 25mm less than the LTA. The Steeping Great Eau and Long Eau and South Forty Foot and Hobhole ended August with an SMD between 6mm and 25mm greater than the LTA.

1.3 River flows

River flow at the key indicator sites through August had been continuing July's downward trend before a strong response to the heavy rainfall at the end of the month. However, despite the rain, nine of the twelve sites ended August with a monthly mean flow below normal or less, with Wansford on the Nene recording exceptionally low flows. The River Lud at Louth recorded normal flows for the time of year, while the Rase at Rase Bishopbridge and the Welland at Ashley recorded above normal river flow. Monthly mean flows ranged from 22% of the LTA on the Welland at Barrowden/Tixover to 185% of the LTA at Rase Bishopbridge on the Rase.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels across LNA continue to trend down despite a healthier volume of rain in August. Despite the trends, five of the key groundwater sites with data for this month still ended August with levels normal or above, with Barton, Horkstow Road recording above normal levels for the time of year. The three chalk sites in the north, in particular, are holding levels well. Both Leasingham Exploratory and Grange Farm are below normal and Grange de Lings is notably low for the time of year. There was no data available in August at Castlethorpe Bridge or Dunholme Road.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Reservoirs stocks at the end of August 2026 were down by 7.8%, on average, from the beginning of the month as demand remained high. All five reservoirs are below their

respective target curves. Stock levels vary from 86% full at Covenham, down 6% through August, to just 61% full at Hollowell, down 10% over the month. Rutland is now below Level 1 and Covenham and Pitsford levels are just above their Level 1 lines, however all sites remain about drought permit trigger levels.

Author: Pan Hydrology Team, Hydrology-EAN-and-LNA@environment-agency.gov.uk

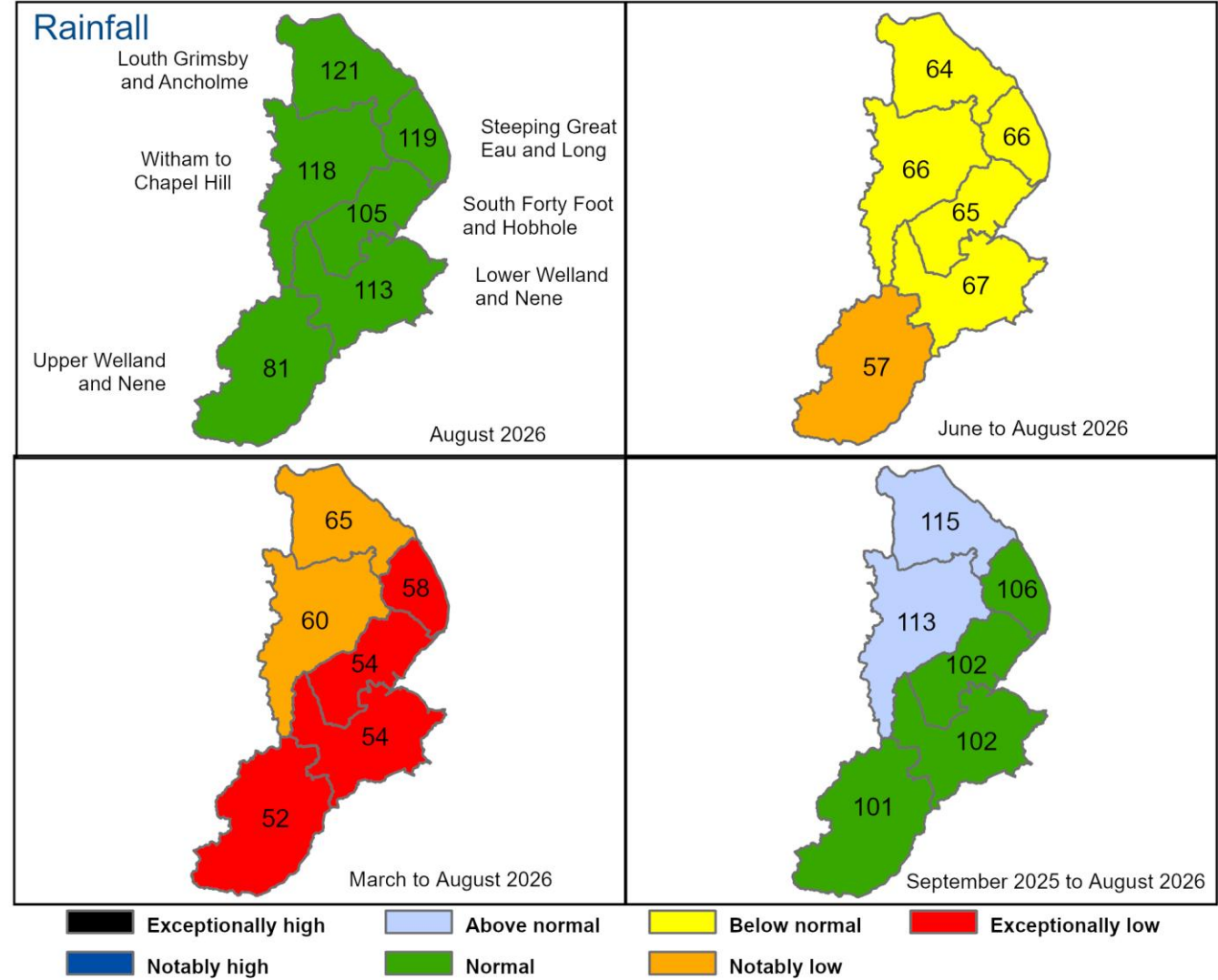
Contact Details: 03708 506 506

All data are provisional and may be subject to revision. The views expressed in this document are not necessarily those of the Environment Agency. Its officers, servants or agents accept no liability for any loss or damage arising from the interpretation or use of the information, or

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, expressed as a percentage of long term average rainfall for the current month (up to 31 August 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months. Category classes are based on an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

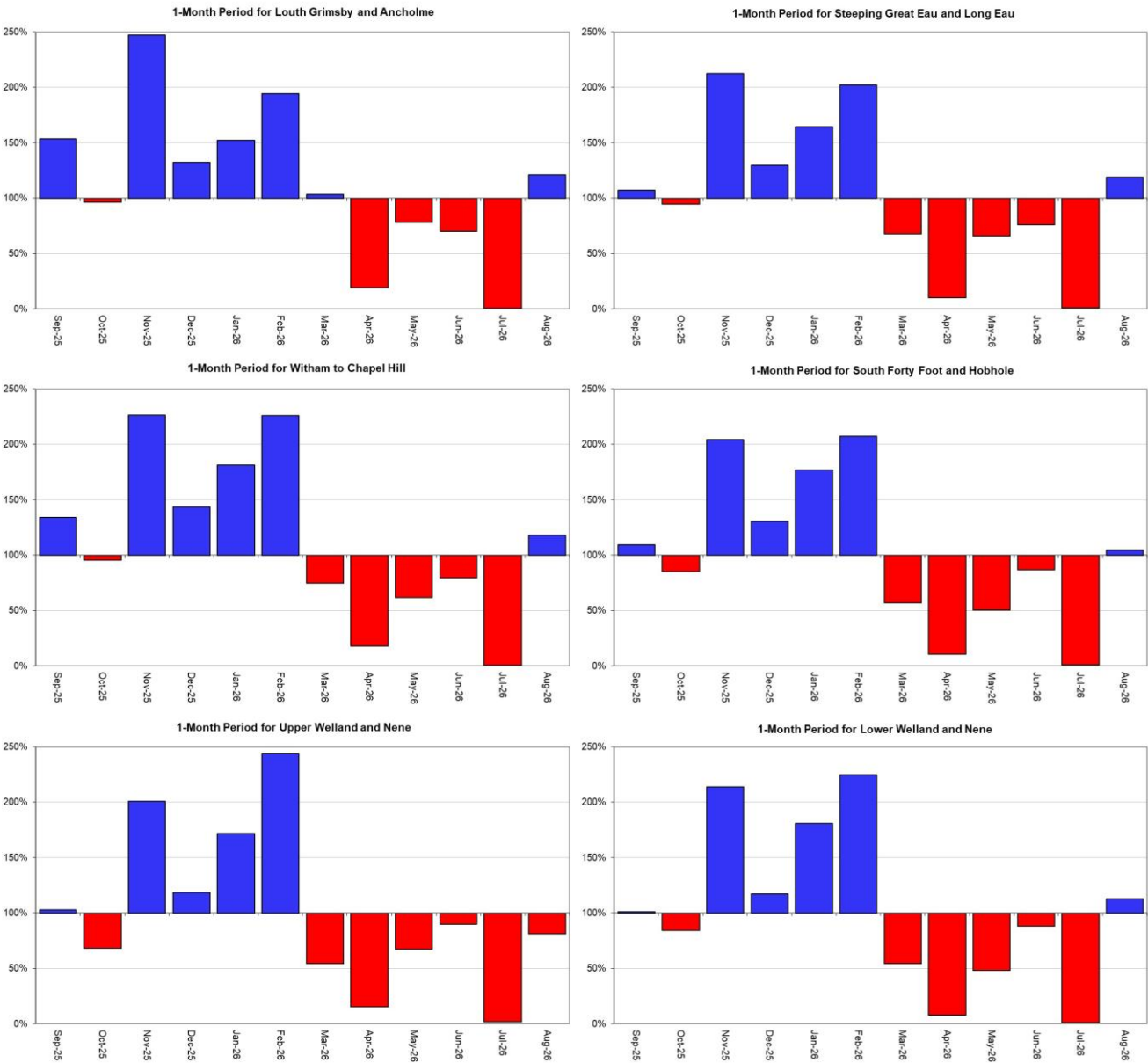


HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges
Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026. Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown copyright. © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights (2026) AC0000807064.

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 each hydrological area.

Greater than 100% LTA rainfall Less than 100% LTA rainfall

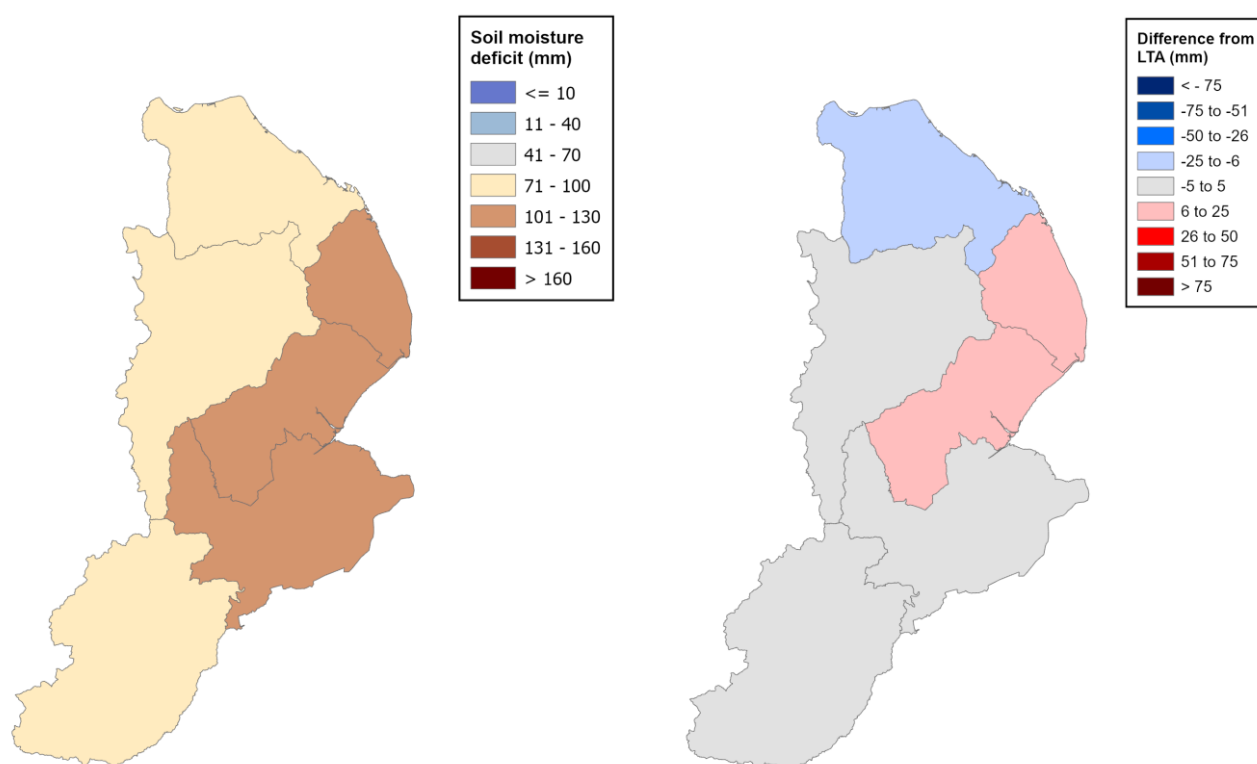


HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges
Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026. Provisional data based on Environment Agency
1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown
copyright. © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights (2026) AC0000807064.

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

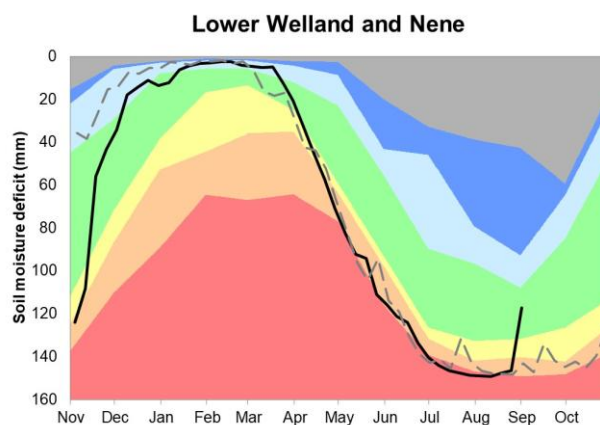
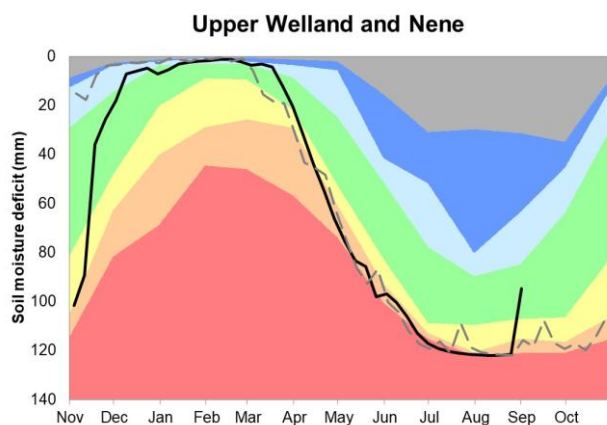
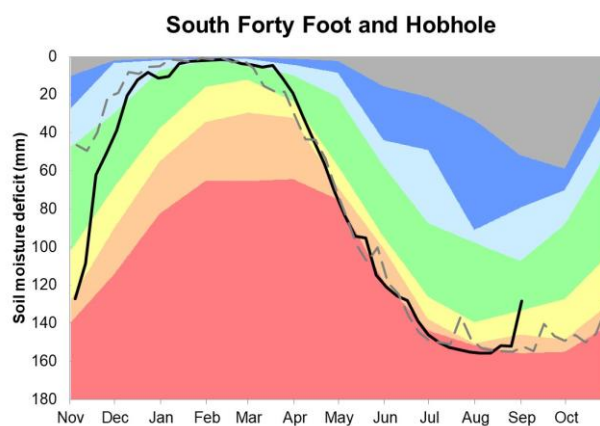
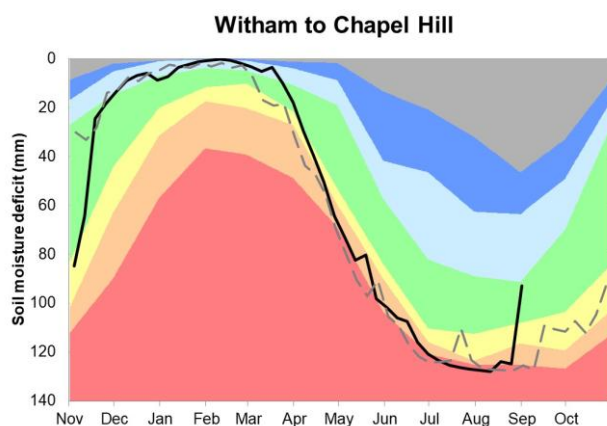
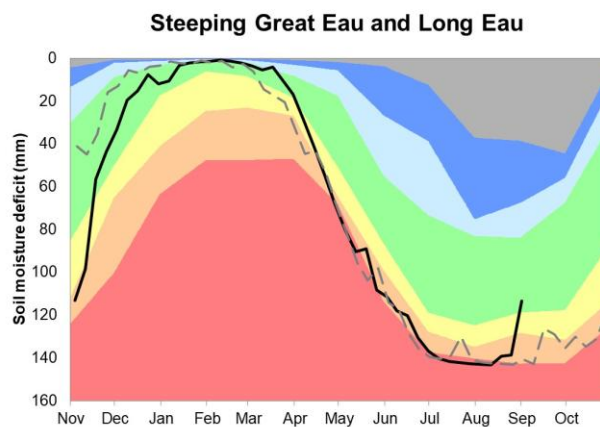
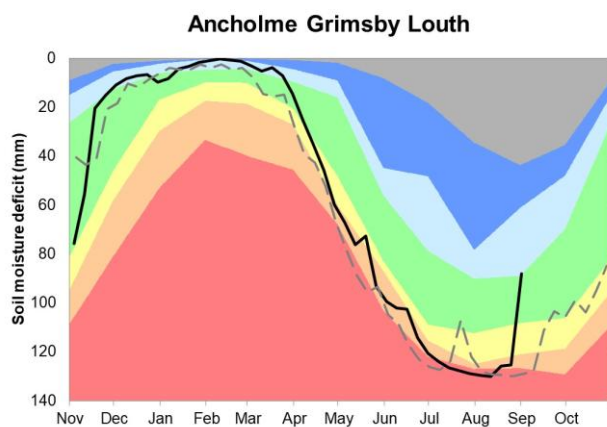
Figure 3.1: Left map shows soil moisture deficits (mm) for week ending 31 August 2026. Right map shows the difference (mm) of the actual soil moisture deficit from the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. MORECS data for real land use.



Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026. © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights (2026) AC0000807064.

3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

Figure 3.2: Soil moisture deficit for this year and last year compared to an analysis of historic weekly MORECS data for real land use for the period 1991 to 2020.

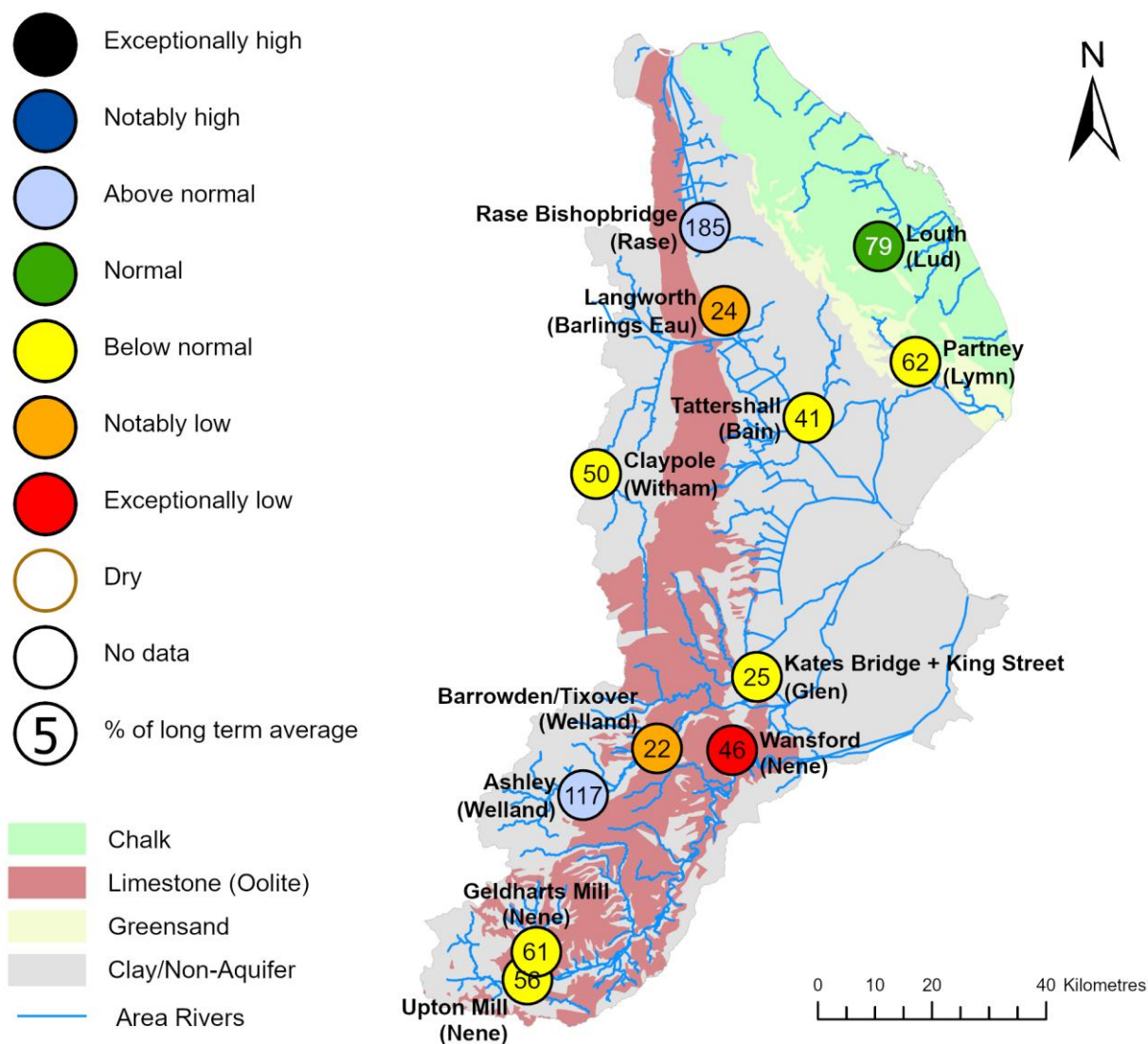


Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026.

4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

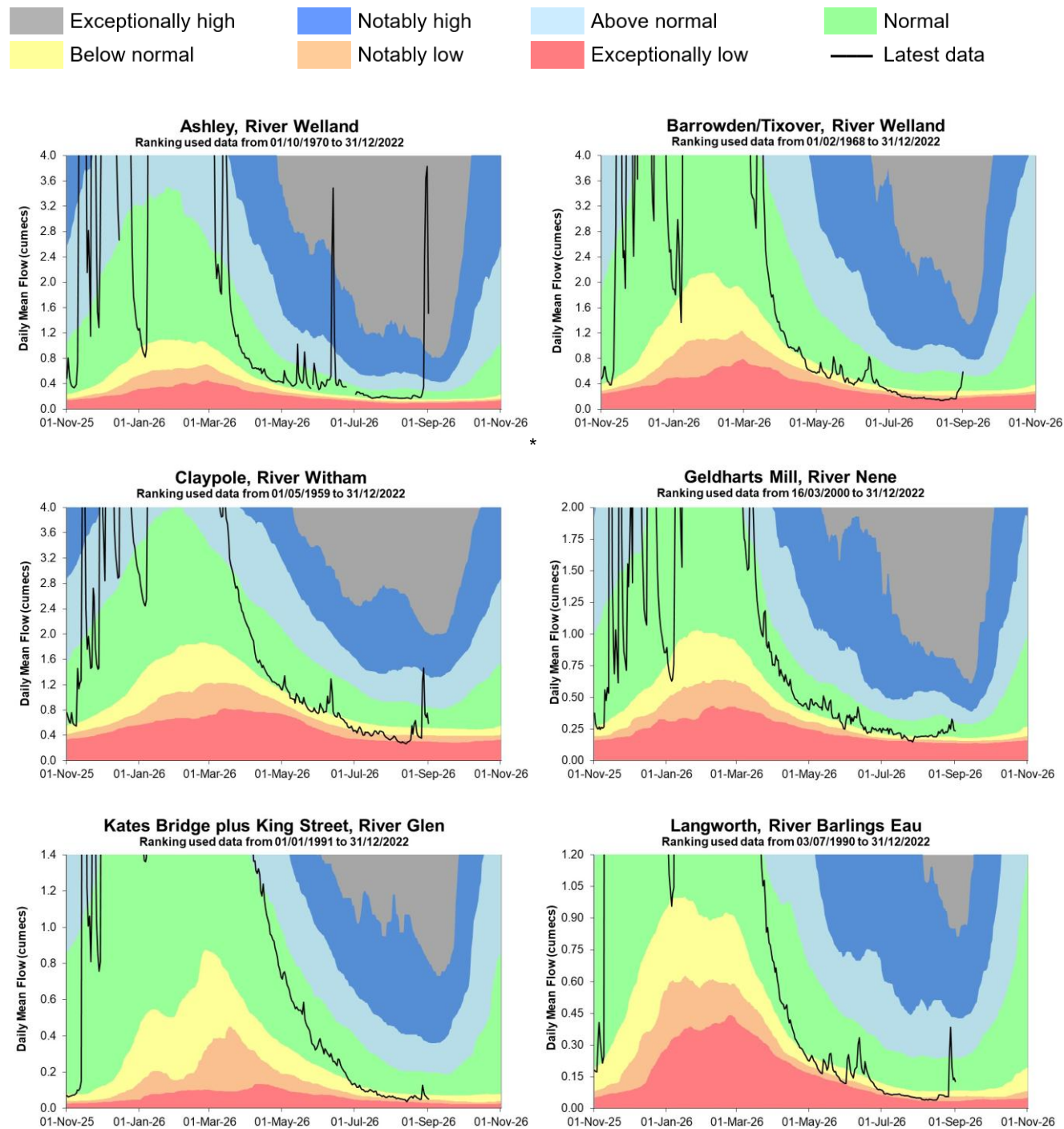
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for August 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic August monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

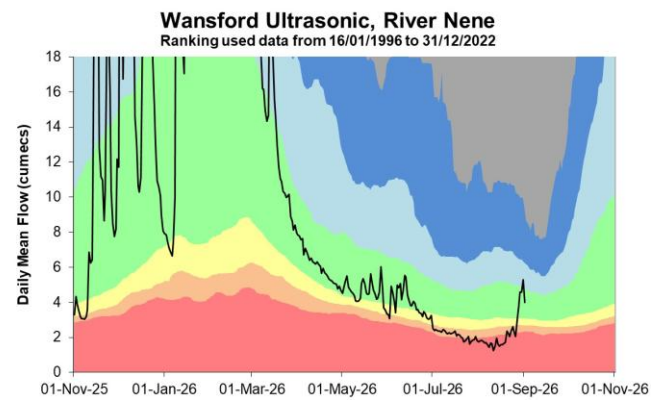
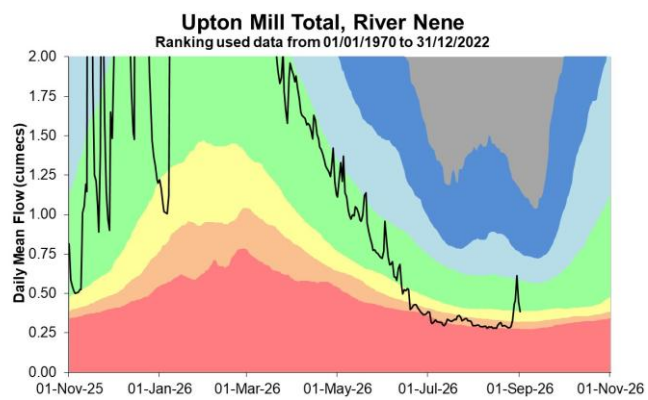
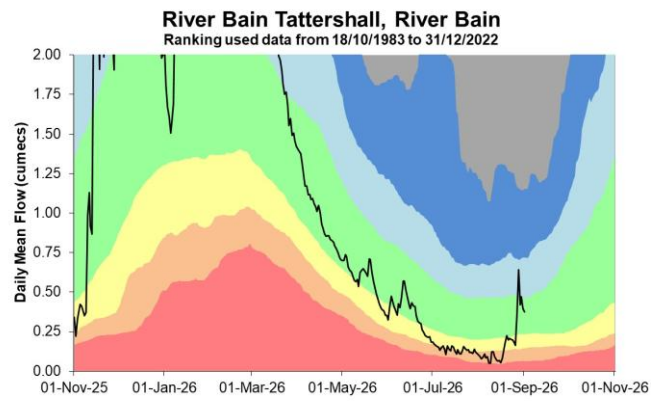
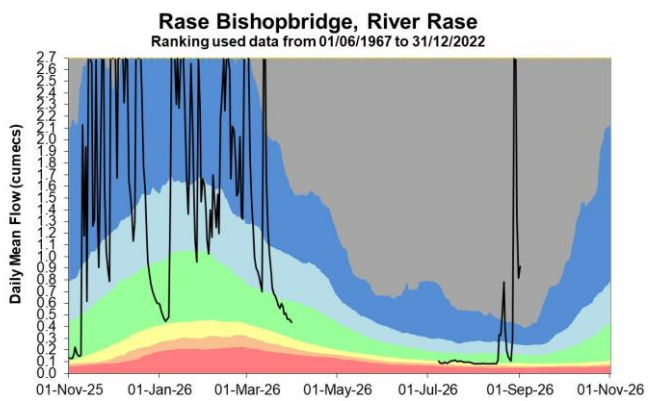
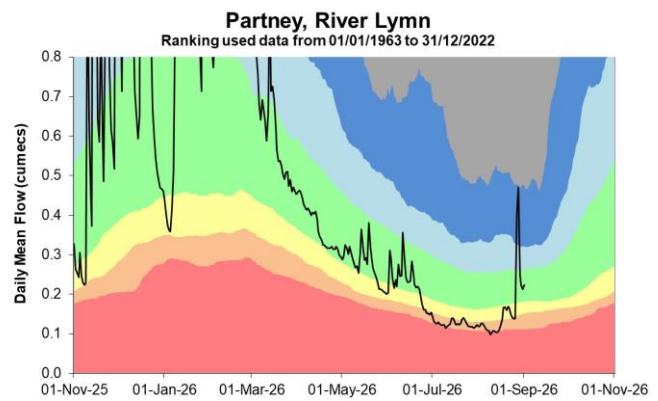
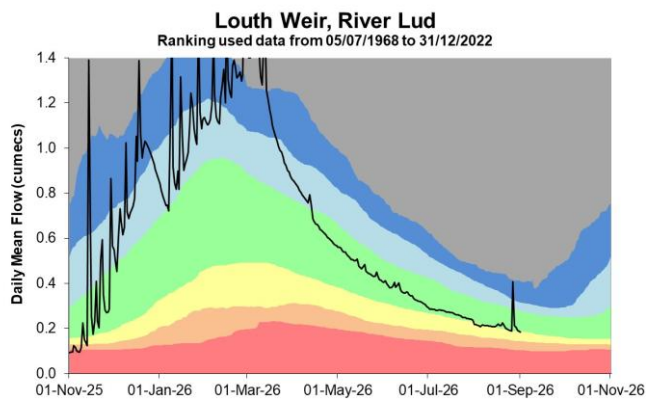


Source: Environment Agency, 2026. Crown copyright. © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights (2026) AC0000807064.

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.





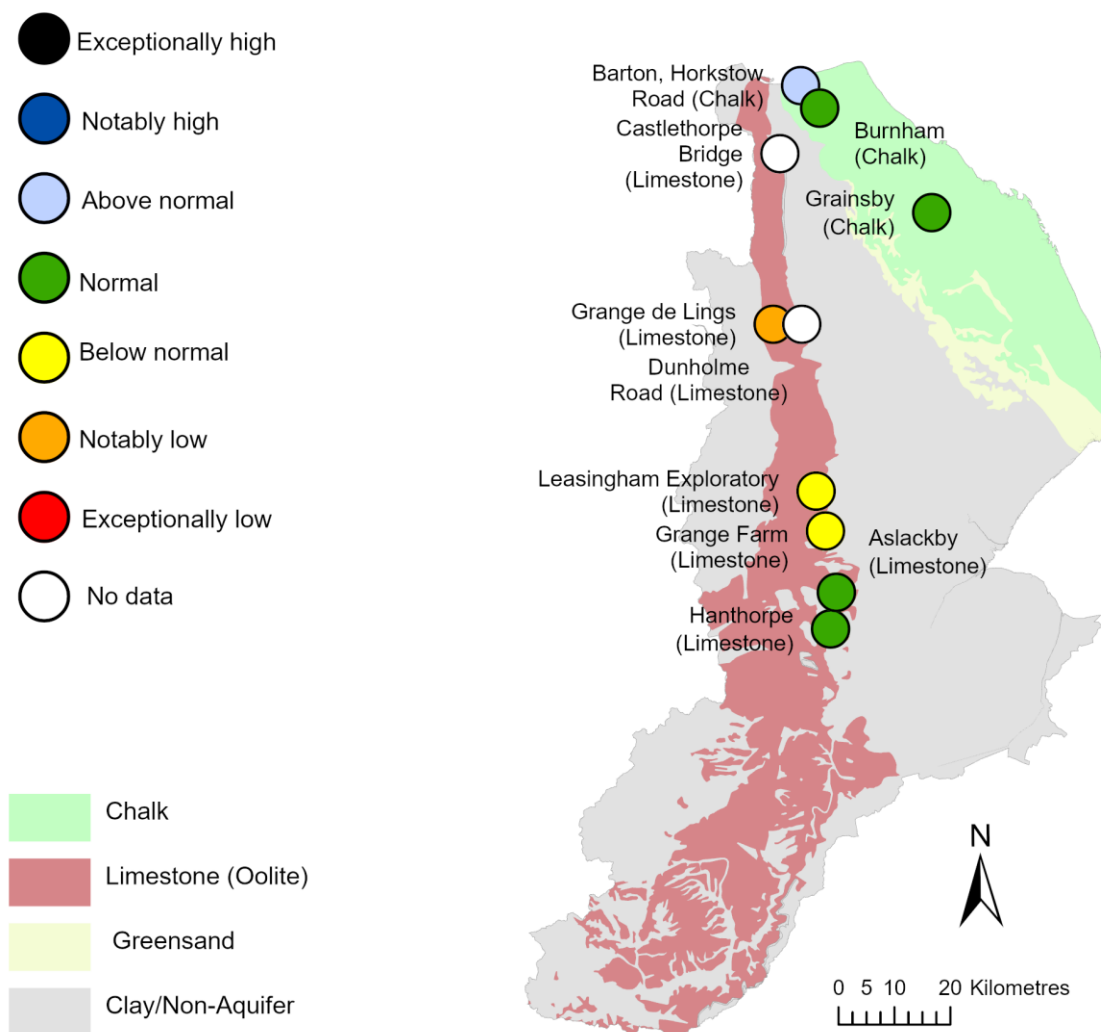
Note Yellow line on Rase Bishopbridge indicates max flow the gauge records accurately/max flow gauge is capped too.

Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

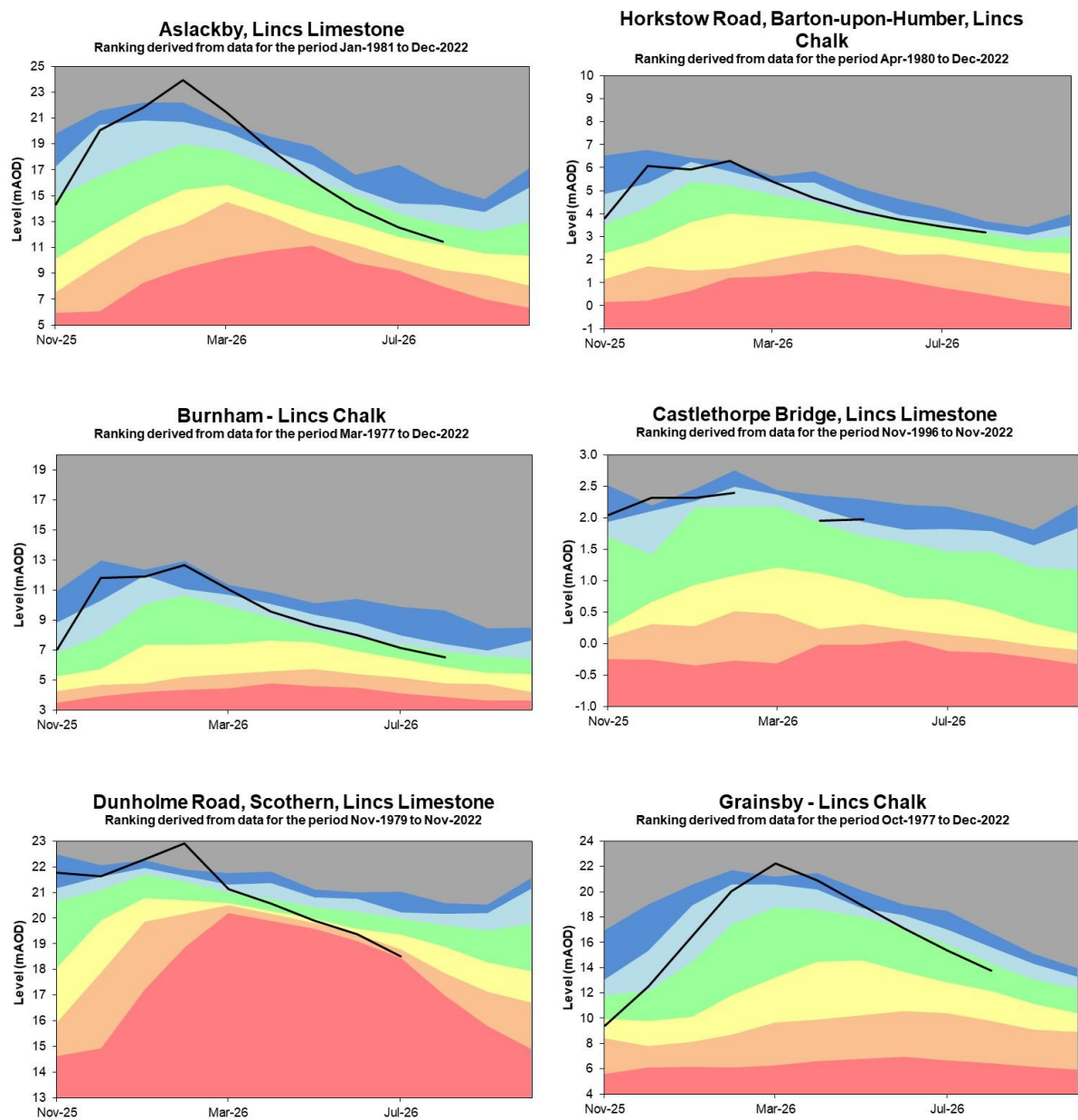
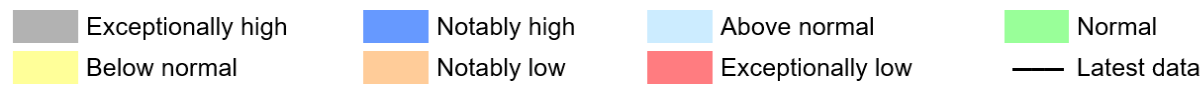
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of August 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic end of August levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

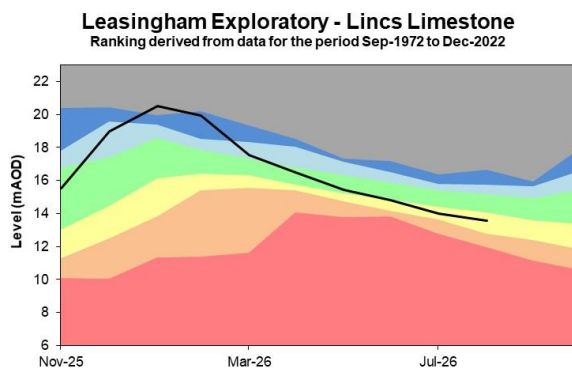
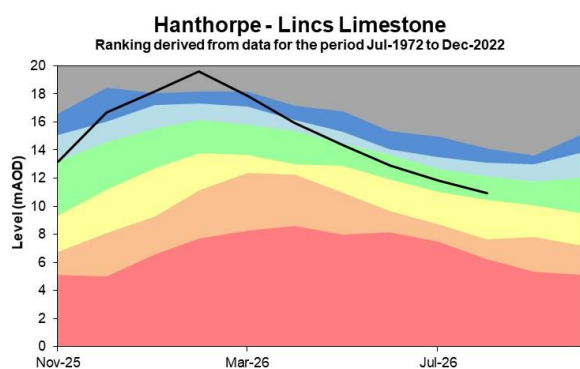
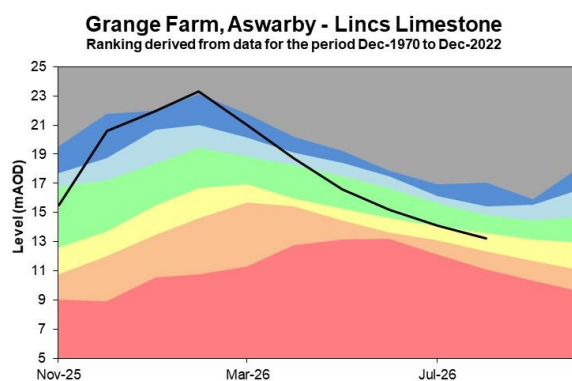
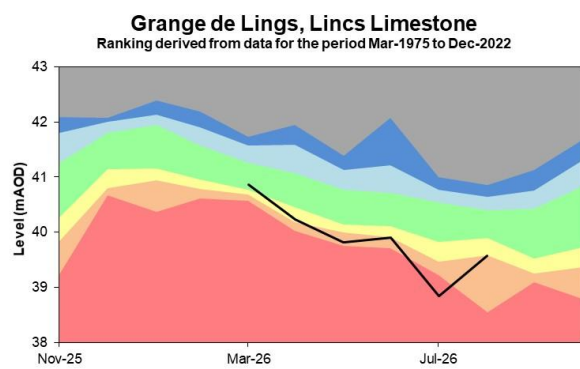


Source: Environment Agency, 2026. Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. © Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright and Database Rights (2026) AC0000807064.

5.2 Groundwater level charts

Figure 5.2: 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.

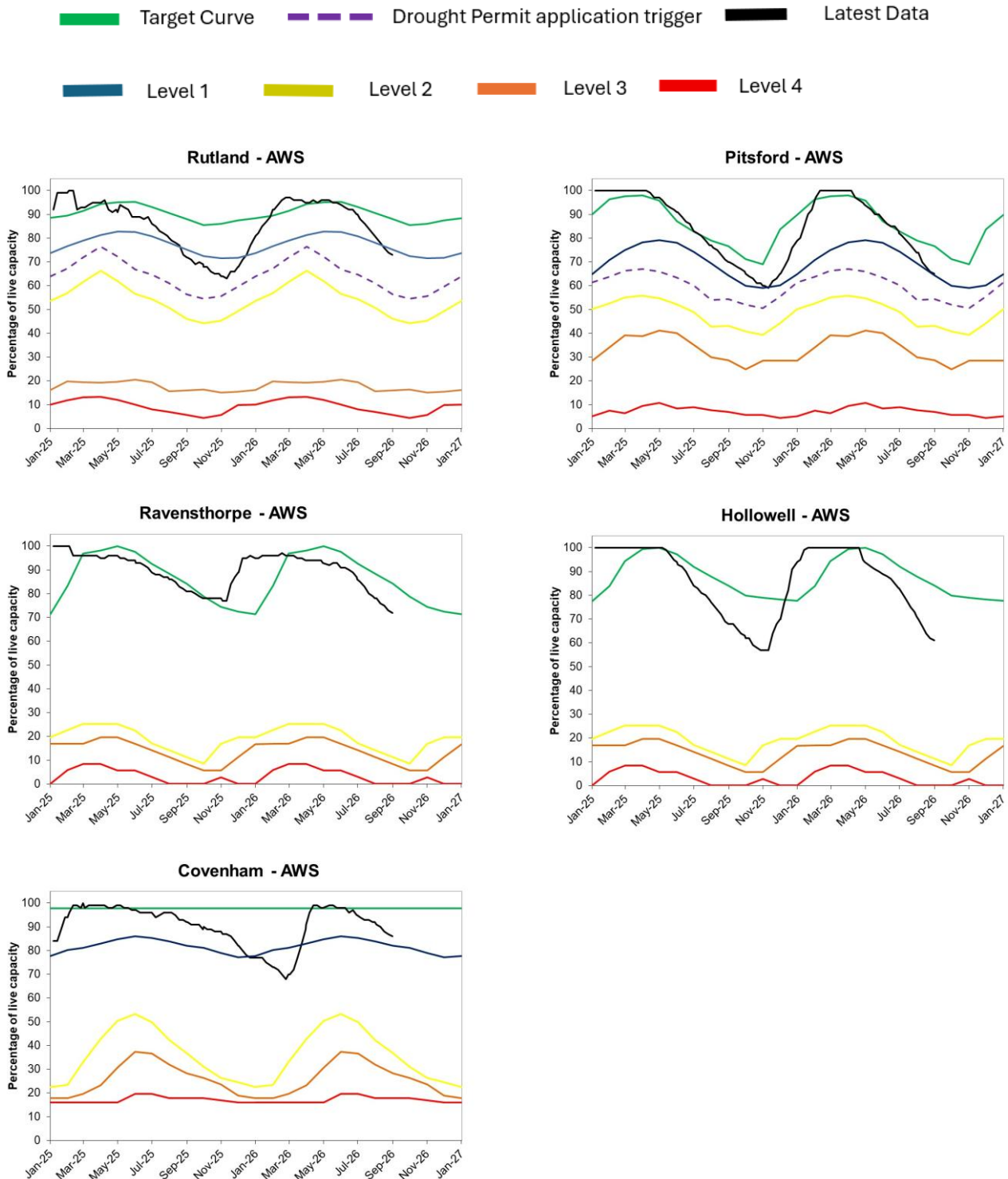




Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the normal operating curve and drought curves.



Source: Anglian Water. For more information on Anglian Water's reservoir levels, please view their [Drought Plan](#)

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^3/s).

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 1 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	Aug 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Aug 2026 band	Jun 2026 to August cumulative band	Mar 2026 to August cumulative band	Sep 2025 to August cumulative band
Louth Grimsby And Ancholme	121	Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Above normal
Lower Welland And Nene	113	Normal	Below normal	Exceptionally low	Normal
South Forty Foot And Hobhole	105	Normal	Below normal	Exceptionally low	Normal
Steeping Great Eau And Long Eau	119	Normal	Below normal	Exceptionally low	Normal
Upper Welland And Nene	81	Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Normal
Witham To Chapel Hill	118	Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Above normal

8.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Aug 2026 band	Jul 2026 band
Ashley	Welland Mkt.harb-rockinghm	Welland Rockingham	Above normal	Below normal
Barrowden/tixover	Welland (rockingham To Stamford)	Welland Stamford	Notably low	Exceptionally low
Claypole	Upper Witham	Witham Bargate Upper	Below normal	Notably low
Geldharts Mill	Nene (brampton Branch)	Nene Brampton Bridge	Below normal	Below normal
Kates Bridge Plus King Street	Glen (an)	Welland and Glen	Below normal	Below normal
Langworth	Barlings Eau	Barlings Eau	Notably low	Notably low
Louth Weir	Lud	Louth Canal	Normal	Normal
Partney	Lymn & Steeping	Lymn Steeping	Below normal	Notably low
Rase Bishopbridge	Ancholme	Ancholme W Mid	Above normal	Below normal
River Bain Tattershall	Bain	Bain	Below normal	Notably low
Upton Mill Total	Nene (kislingbury Branch)	Nene Kislingbry Bridge	Below normal	Notably low
Wansford Combined	Nene (wollaston To Wansford)	Nene Wansford	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Aug 2026 band	End of Jul 2026 band
Aslackby	Limestone (cornbrash Formation)	Normal	Normal
Barton-upon-humber	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Chalk	Above normal	Normal
Burnham	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Chalk	Normal	Normal
Castlethorpe Bridge	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Limestone		
Dunholme Road, Scothern	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Limestone		Notably low
Grainsby	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Chalk	Normal	Normal
Grange De Lings	Grimsby Ancholme Louth Limestone	Notably low	Exceptionally low
Grange Farm, Aswarby	Limestone (mudstone - Peterborough Member)	Below normal	Normal
Hanthorpe	Limestone (cornbrash Formation)	Normal	Normal
Leasingham Exploratory	Limestone (rutland Formation)	Below normal	Below normal