

Monthly water situation report: Midlands

1 Summary - September 2026

Despite a wet start to the month, the Midlands received 59% of the long-term average (LTA) rainfall in September. While most hydrological areas were classified as having normal rainfall totals during the month, all areas received less than 100% of their September LTA. Soil moisture deficits (SMDs) decreased following rainfall at the end of August and beginning of September but increased overall during September, leaving soils drier than expected for the time of year by month-end. River flows have generally remained low, with more than half of monitoring sites recording below normal monthly mean flows and two sites recording exceptionally low flows. Groundwater sites continue to record normal groundwater levels or higher for all but one site. Only Southards Lane, on magnesian limestone, is recording below normal groundwater levels. Reservoir storage levels remained below average for the time of year at all 10 reservoirs, with storage decreasing at all but one reservoir during the month.

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

1.1 Rainfall

An average of 35.6 mm of rain fell across the Midlands in September, equating to 59% of the LTA. The majority of hydrological areas, 9 out of 12, were classed as normal rainfall totals in September. Three remaining hydrological areas to the east all recorded below normal rainfall totals in September. All hydrological areas recorded below 100% of their September rainfall LTA, with the Welsh Mountains recording the highest LTA percentage of 99%.

Over the past 3 months, half of the Midlands hydrological catchments recorded exceptionally low rainfall. These catchments were in the south and west of the region. Two catchments, the Derwent and Tame, recorded below normal rainfall amounts. The remaining 4 catchments, the Lower Trent, Soar, Dove and Upper Trent all recorded notably low rainfall amounts.

Over the past 6 months, 8 of 12 hydrological catchments recorded exceptionally low rainfall totals. The Dove and the Derwent in the north recorded below normal rainfall amounts. The Tame and Upper Trent in the central and the north of the Midlands, both recorded notably low rainfall amounts.

Over the past 12 months, 7 of 12 hydrological catchments recorded normal rainfall amounts. Three catchments, the Lower Trent, Upper Trent and the Dove, recorded above normal rainfall amounts. The Derwent and Tame recorded notably high rainfall amounts.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

After a wetter transition period from August to September, SMD values at the beginning of September dropped (soils got wetter). However, SMD values increased overall during September as soils became drier. More than half of the hydrological areas had an actual SMD value of between 101 mm and 130 mm. The remaining areas, concentrated in the northern half of the Midlands, recorded between 71 mm and 100 mm of SMD. Relative to the LTA, all but one hydrological area recorded SMDs that were 26 mm to 50 mm higher than average. The Lower Wye, in the south-west of the Midlands, recorded SMD 51mm to 75mm greater compared to its September LTA.

Soils in the Midlands remain drier than expected by the end of September.

1.3 River flows

More than half of the flow sites in September recorded below normal monthly mean flows. These were located throughout the Upper and Middle Severn, the Trent and the Wye catchments. Six sites recorded normal flows, 3 of these were located in the East Midlands, and 3 located along the south-eastern border of the West Midlands. Two sites, Tenbury in the west, and Ebley Mill to the south, both recorded exceptionally low flows.

Wedderburn Bridge continues to have data issues and has been excluded from this report. Clifton Hall has been experiencing data issues this month and has therefore been excluded from this September report. Deerhurst is down for maintenance; therefore, Haw Bridge flows have been used as a proxy due to its close proximity.

1.4 Groundwater levels

By the end of September, 5 out of 9 groundwater sites, covering various geology types, were recording normal groundwater levels. Southards Lane, which is over a limestone geology in the north, recorded below normal groundwater levels. Also in the north, but over a sandstone geology, Crossley Hill recorded notably high groundwater levels, and Coxmoor exceptionally high groundwater levels. Weir Farm to the west, over a sandstone geology, recorded above normal groundwater levels.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

All 10 reservoirs reported on in this report continue to have below average storage for this time of year. Storage levels at the end of September in all but one reservoir had decreased since the end of August. Clywedog in the west was the exception, with storage levels rising. By the end of September, reservoir storage in the Midlands ranged from 24% to 72% full.

1.6 Environmental impact

West Midlands moved to drought incident status on 28 July 2026. East Midlands moved into drought incident status on 10 August 2026. Both areas remain in drought incident status. We

continue to work with water companies and other abstractors to manage water resources and take precautionary actions where needed.

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. Regulation was instigated when flows dropped below the threshold on 20 June 2026 and as of 30 September 2026, there have been 86 days of Severn Regulation so far. 15 out of 30 days in September were regulation days and regulation releases were made on the last day of September.

Table 1.1: River Severn operational releases on 30 September 2026

Water supply (MI/d)	Total releases	Normal releases	Regulation releases	Flood drawdown releases
Llyn Clywedog	18 MI/d	18 MI/d	0 MI/d	0 MI/d
Lake Vyrnwy	150 MI/d	22 MI/d	128 MI/d	0 MI/d
Shropshire Groundwater scheme	210 MI/d	N/A	210 MI/d	N/A

1.8 River Wye operations

Following on from the previous month, flows remained below the threshold at Redbrook and so regulation releases continued to be required. Regulation releases were made for the majority of the month, except for between 15 September and 18 September inclusive, and 21 September and 22 September.

1.9 Water abstraction restrictions

As of 30 September 2026 there are 109 water abstraction licence restrictions in place across the Midlands affecting 398 licences in total.

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

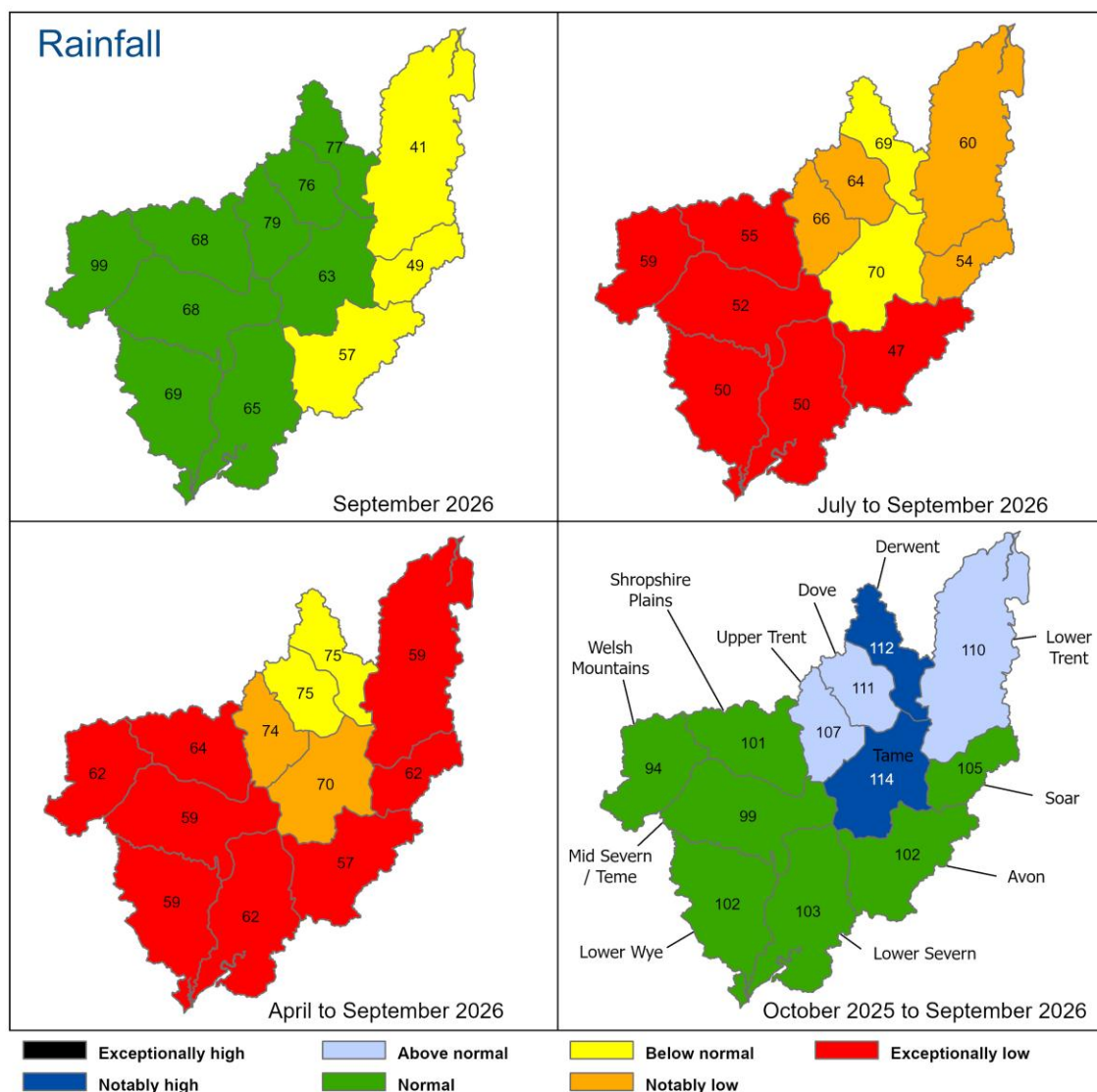
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2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

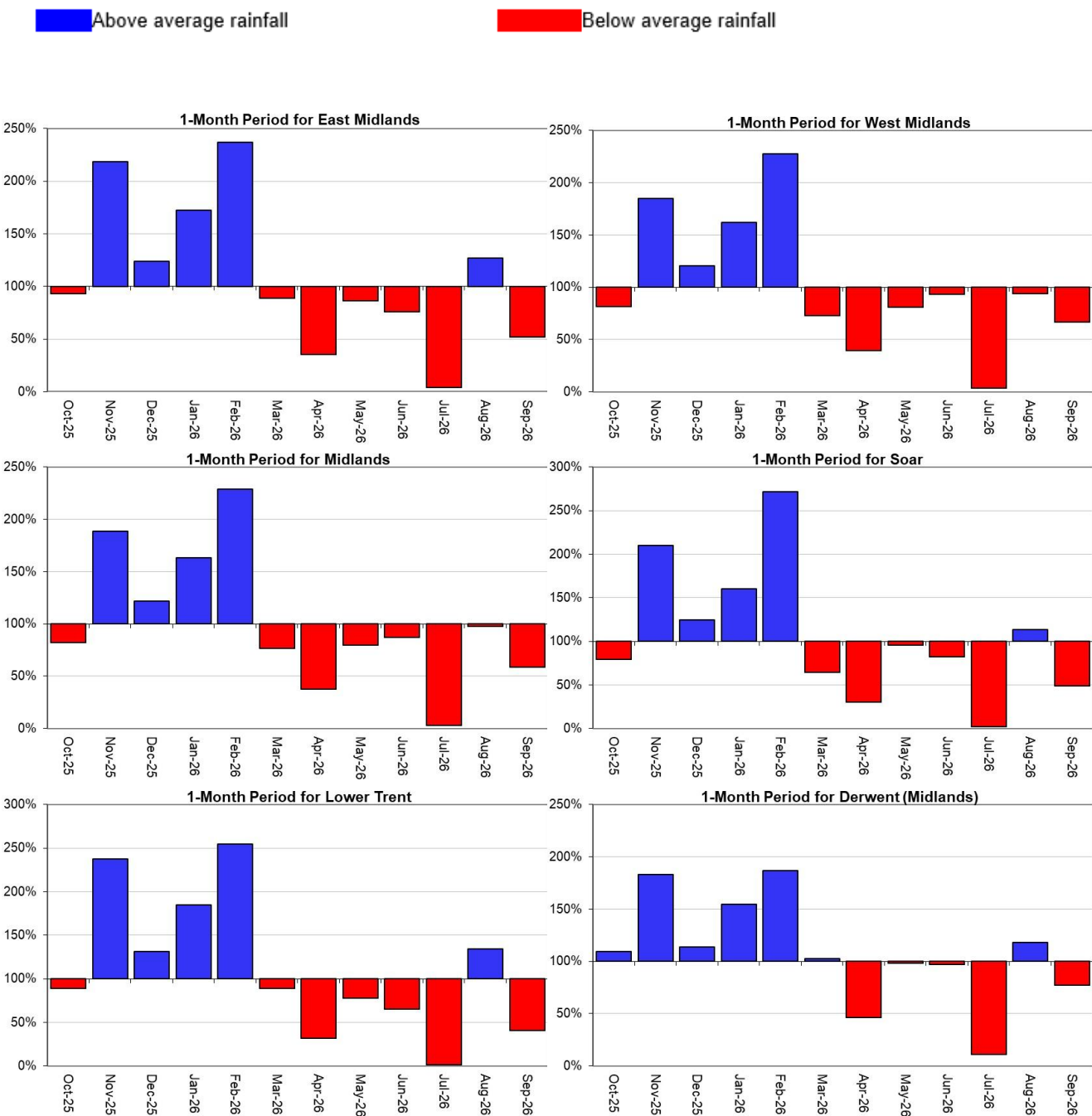
Figure 2.1: Rainfall as % LTA for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 30 September 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals from 1991 to 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

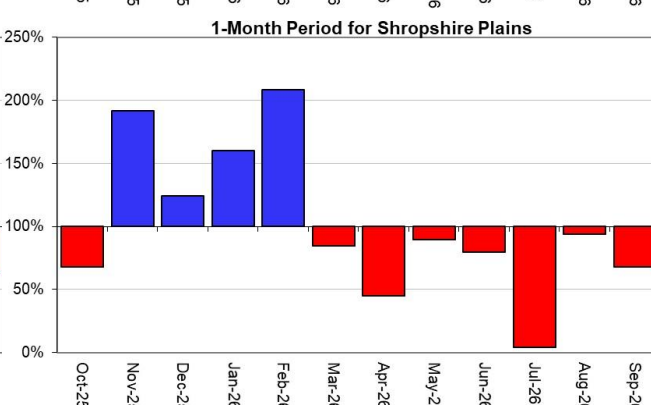
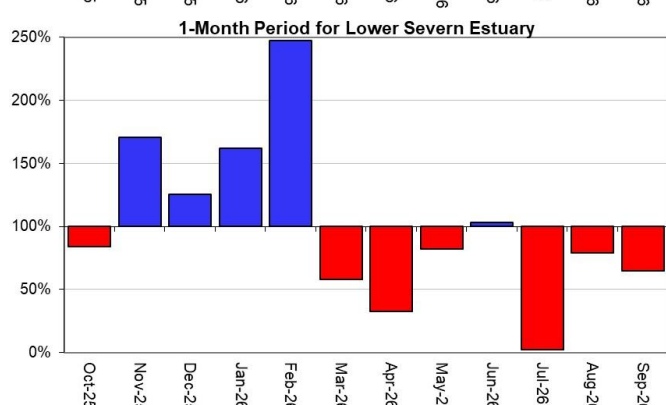
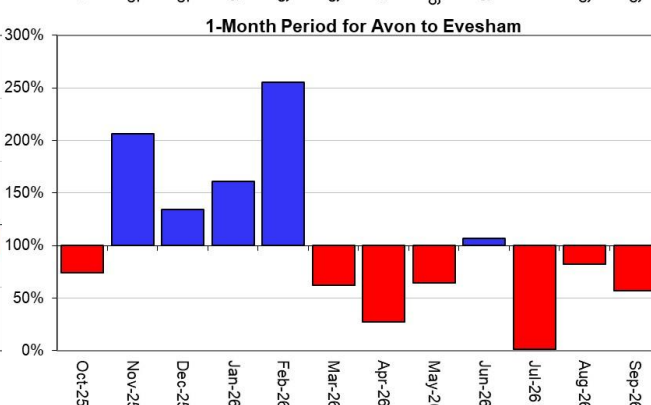
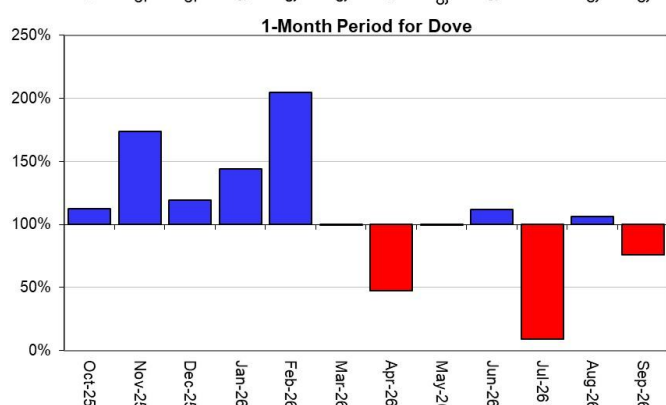
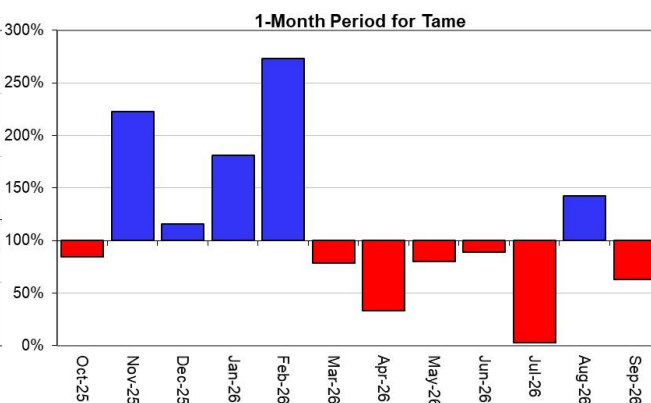
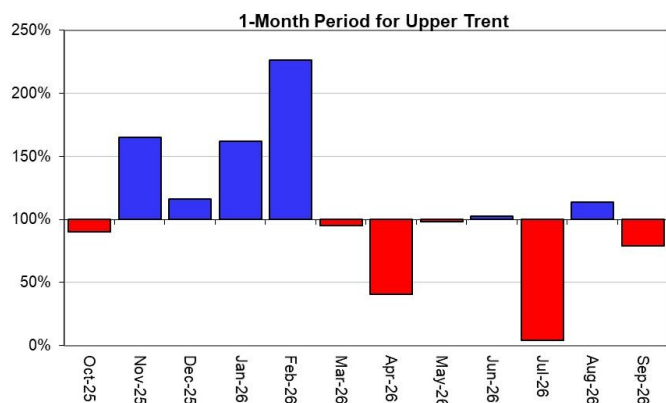


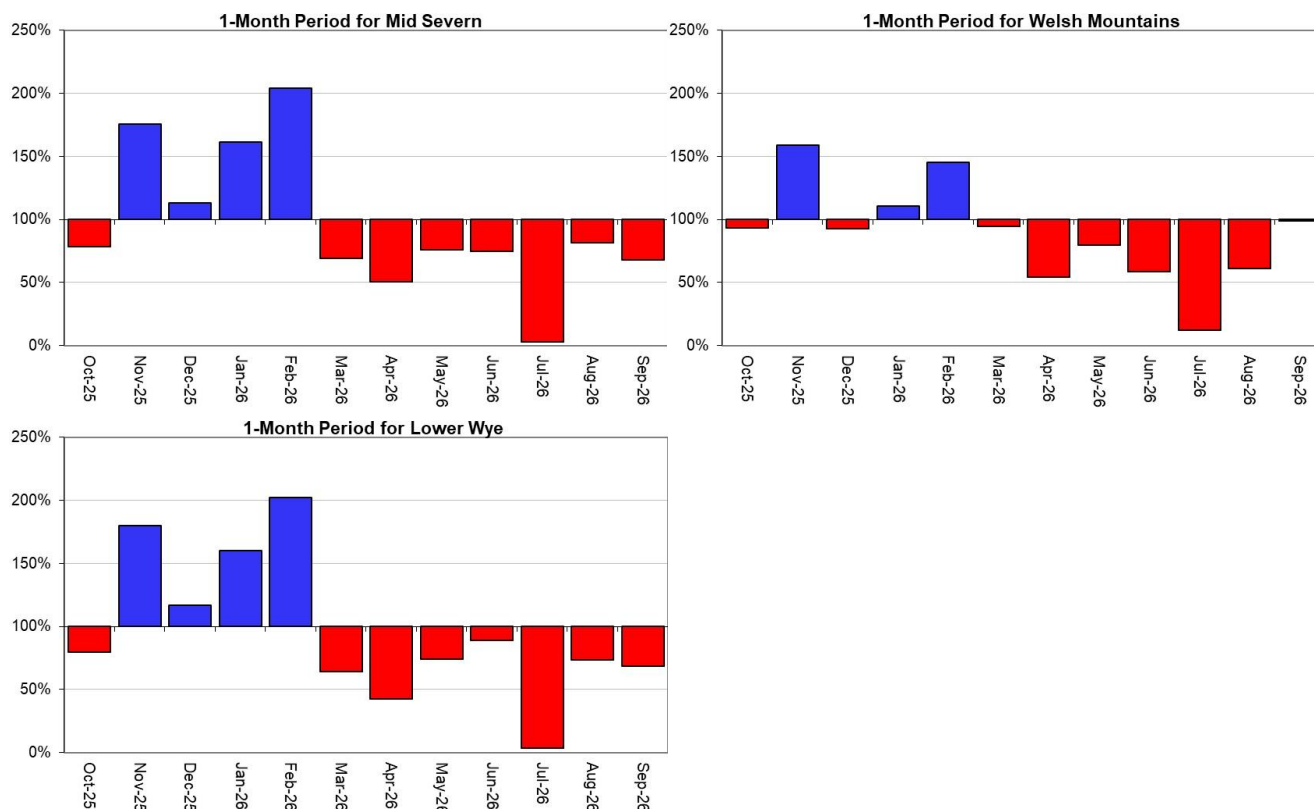
Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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





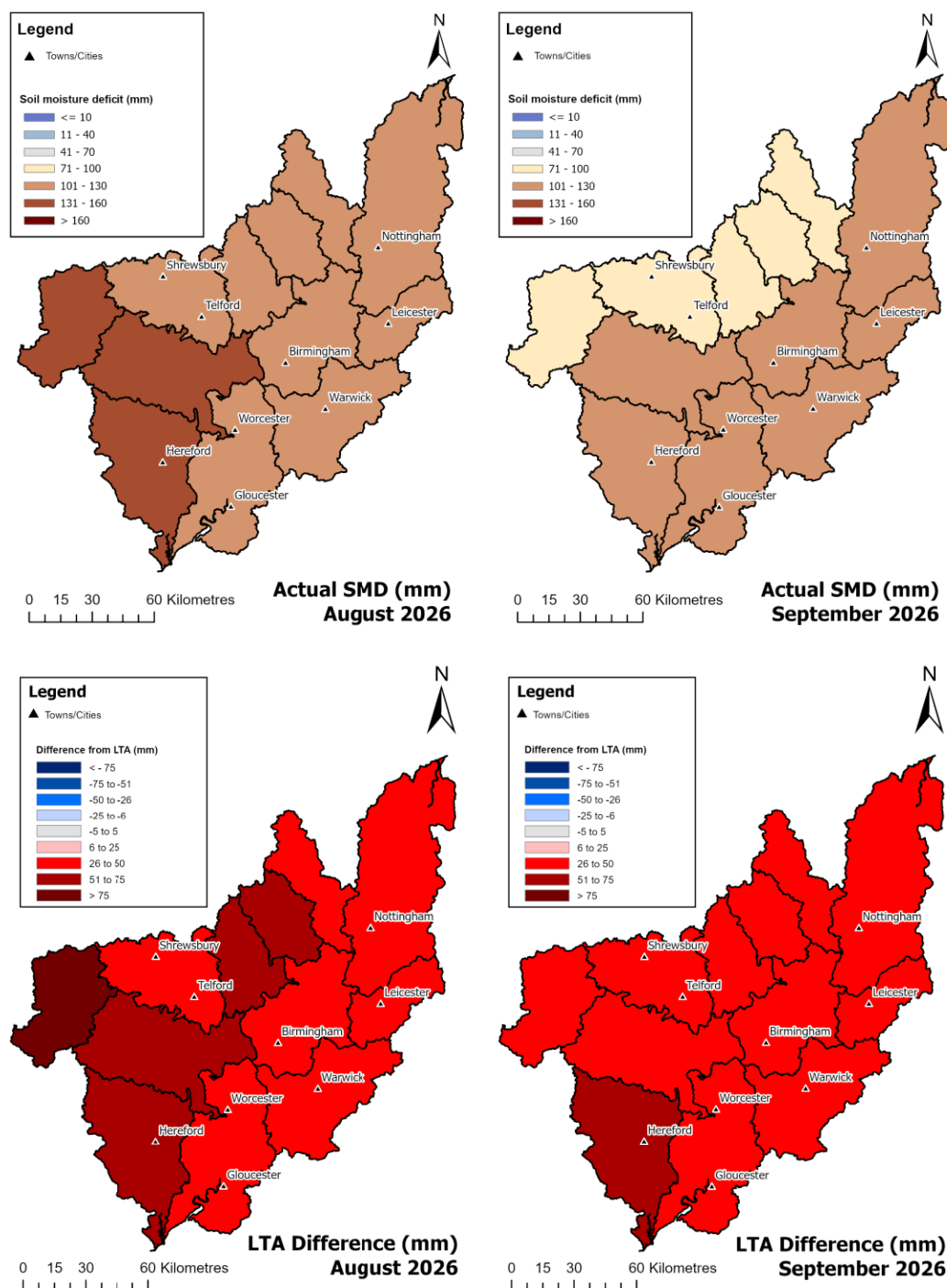


Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

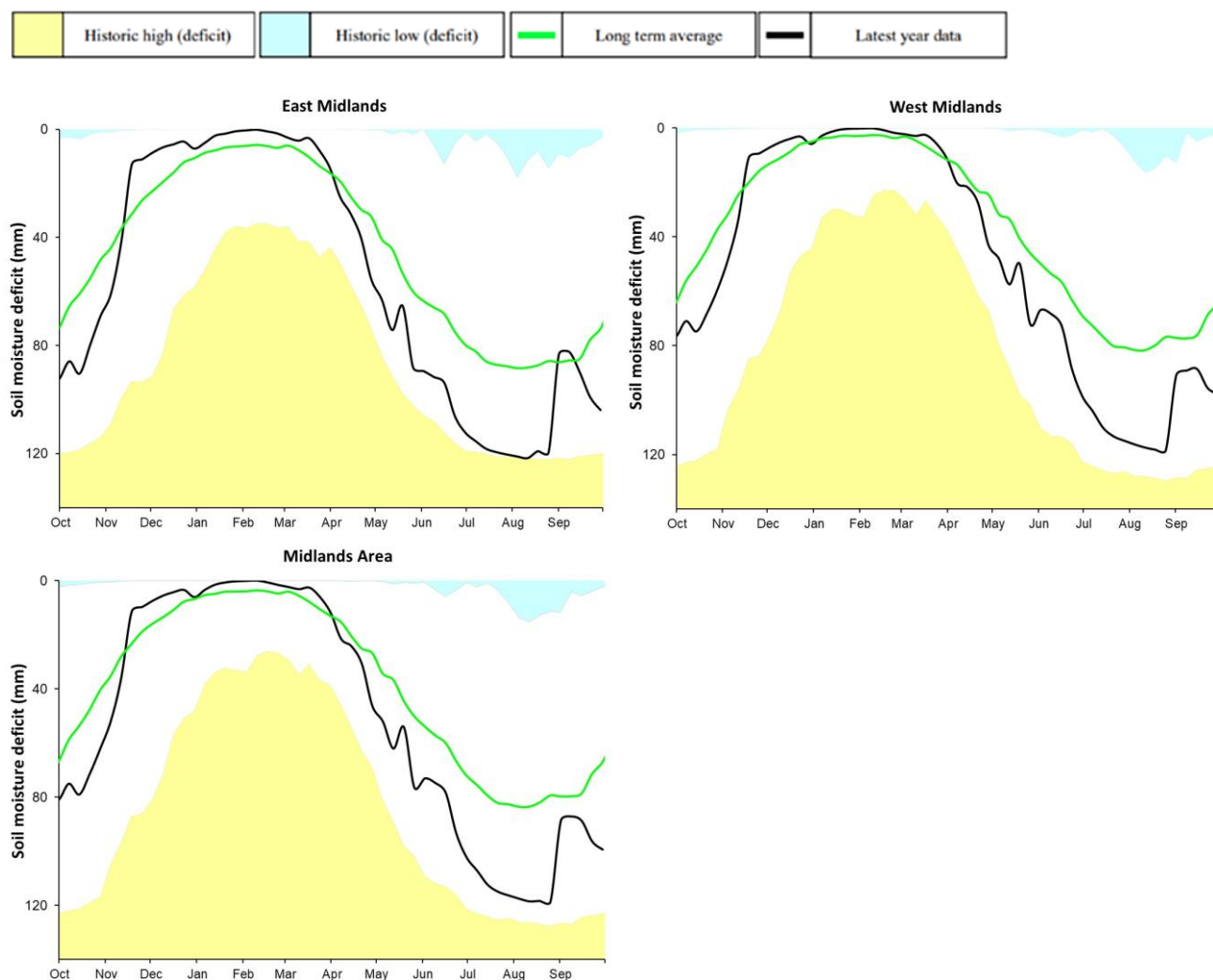
Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 30 September 2026 (right pane) and the previous month (left pane). Top row shows actual soil moisture deficits (mm) and bottom row shows the difference (mm) between the actual and the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. Calculated from MORECS data for real land use.



(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit charts for selected areas across the Midlands compared to 1991 to 2020 long term average, and historic maximums and minimums (1961 to 2025). Weekly MORECS data for real land use.



(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026.) All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

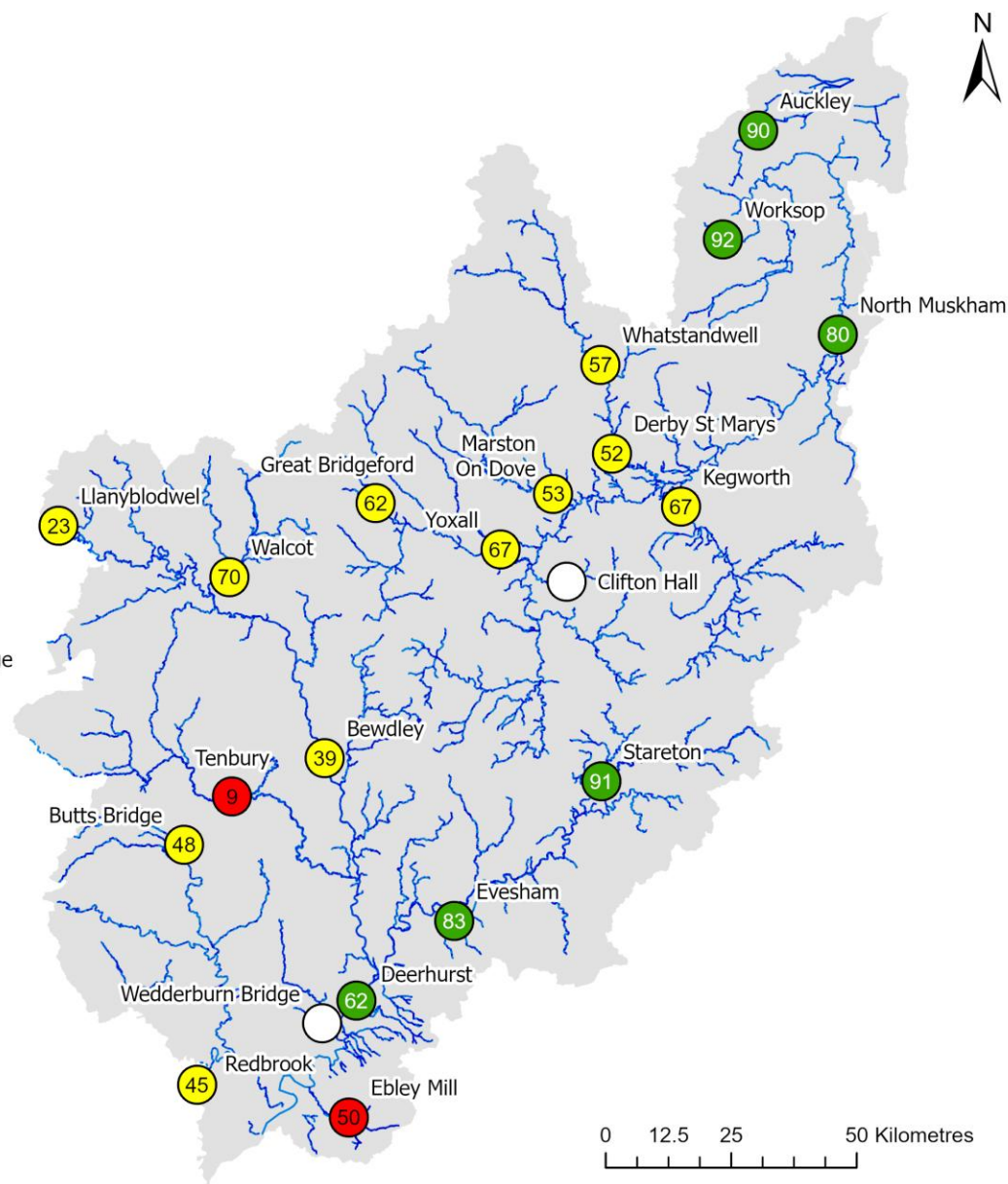
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for September 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic September monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

Legend

Area Rivers

Surface water sites

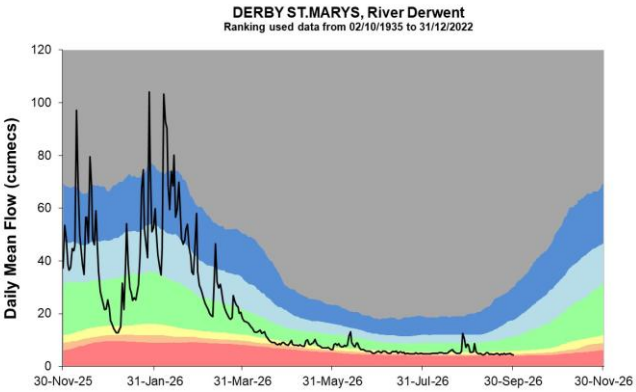
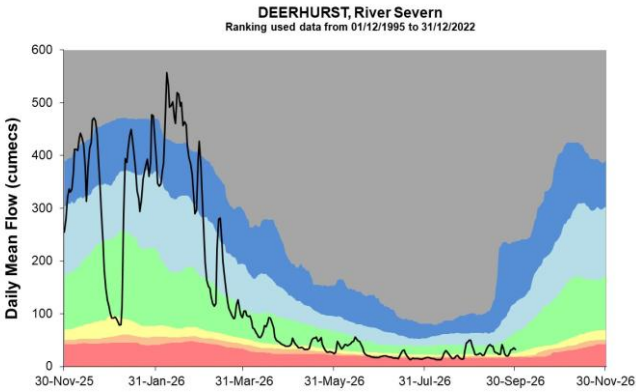
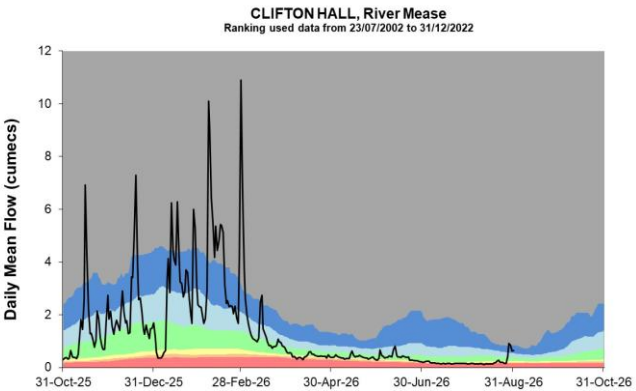
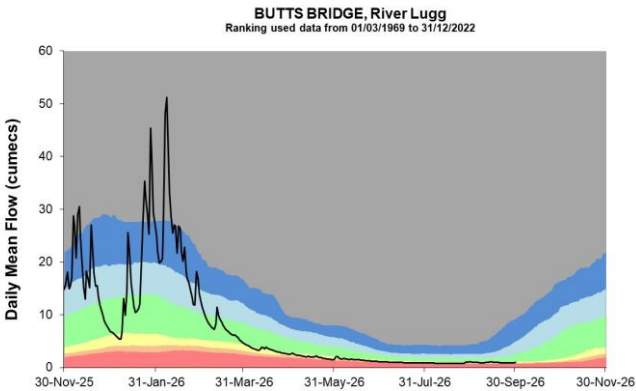
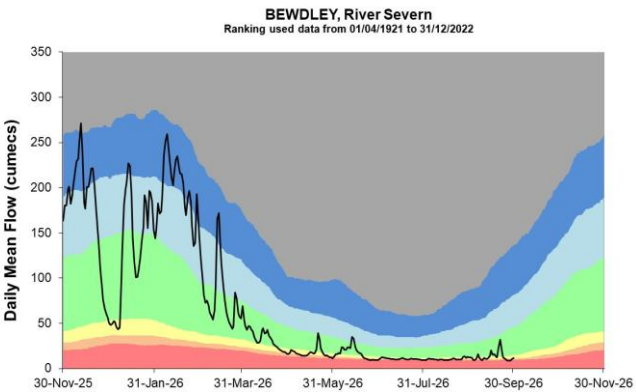
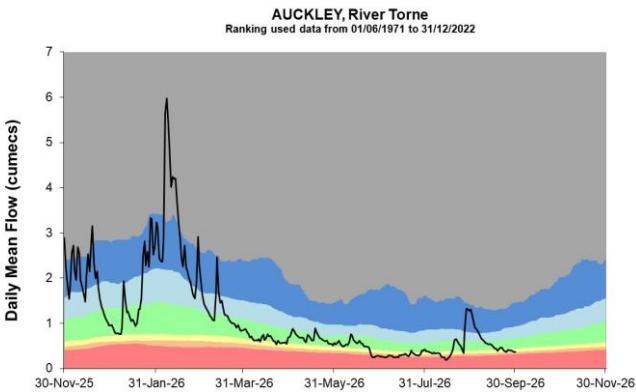
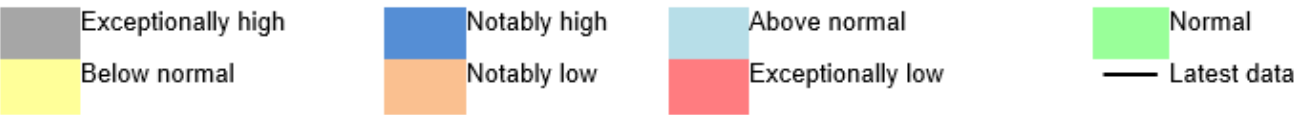
- Exceptionally high
- Notably high
- Above normal
- Normal
- Below normal
- Notably low
- Exceptionally low
- Dry
- No data
- (5) % of long term average

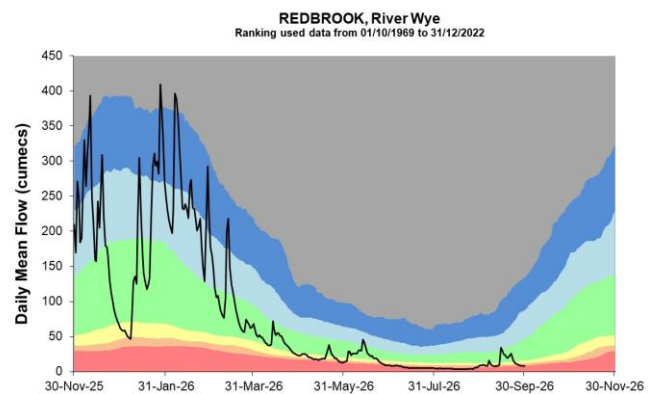
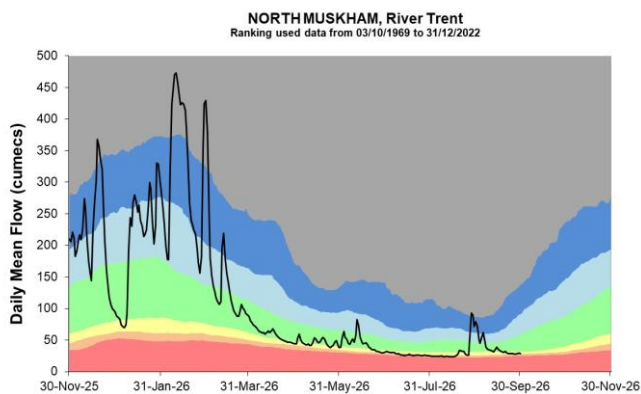
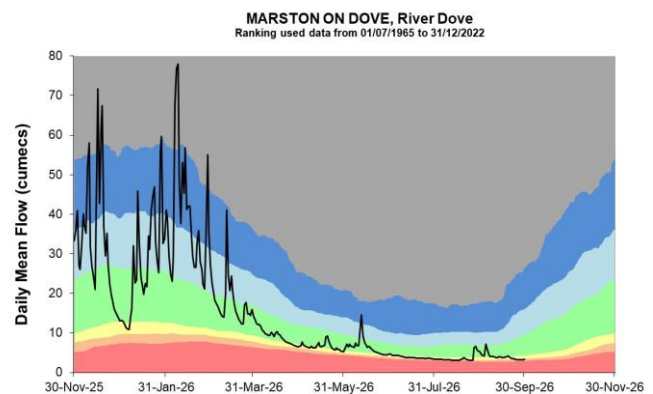
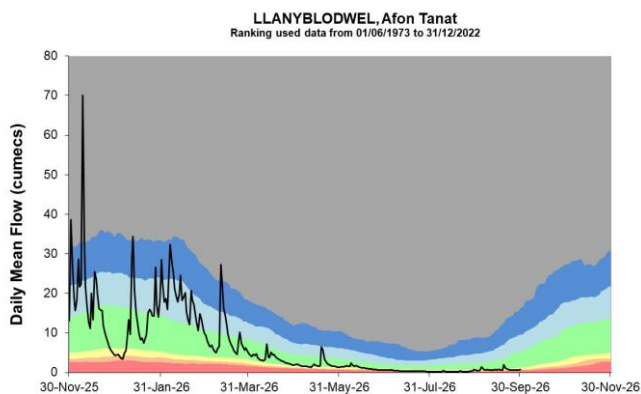
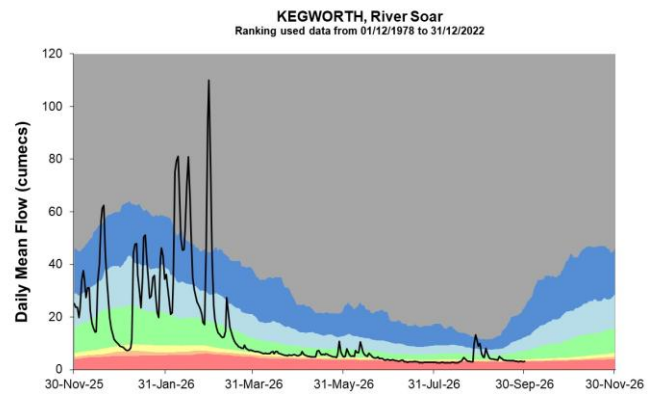
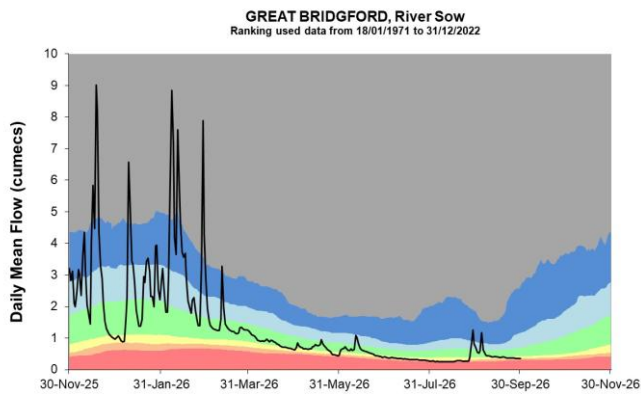
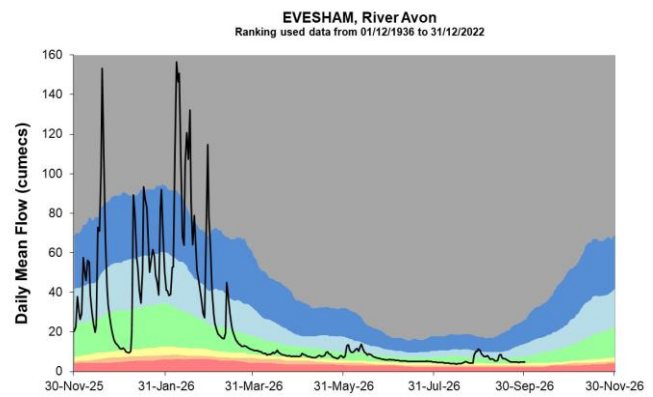
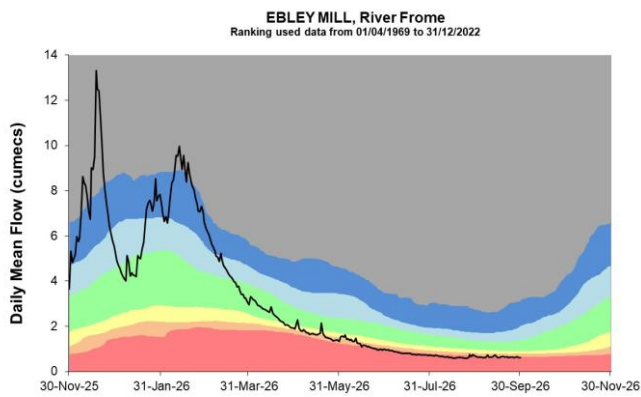


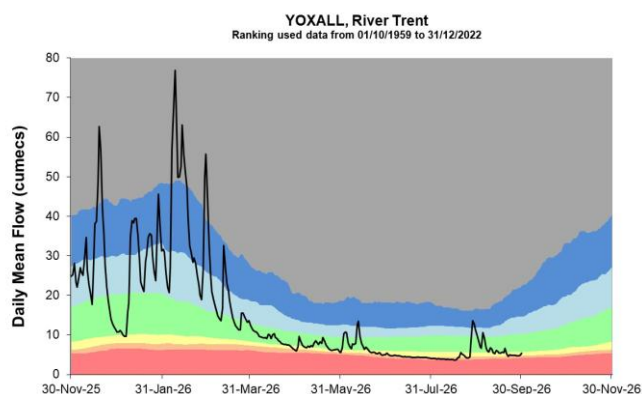
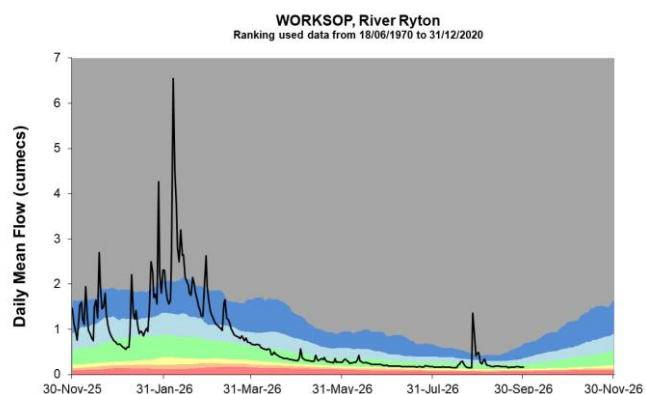
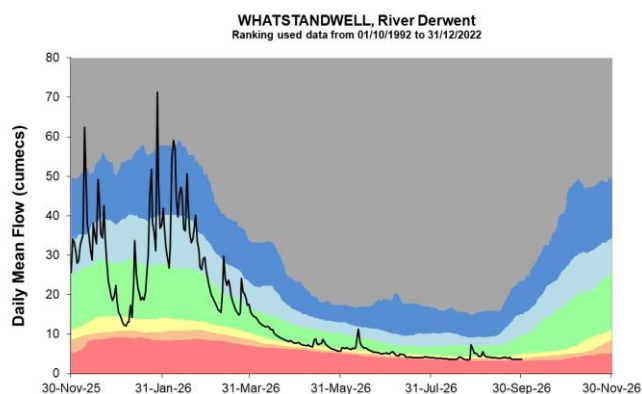
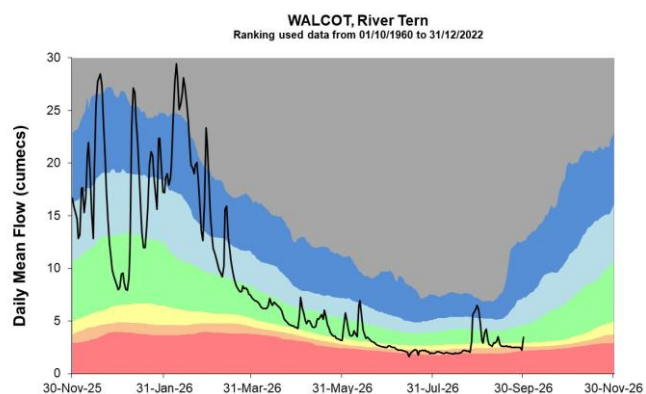
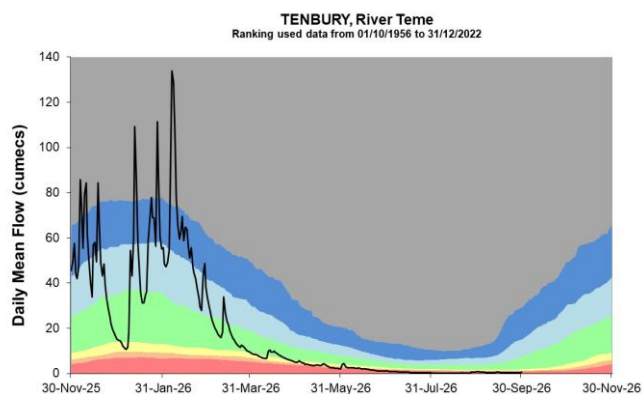
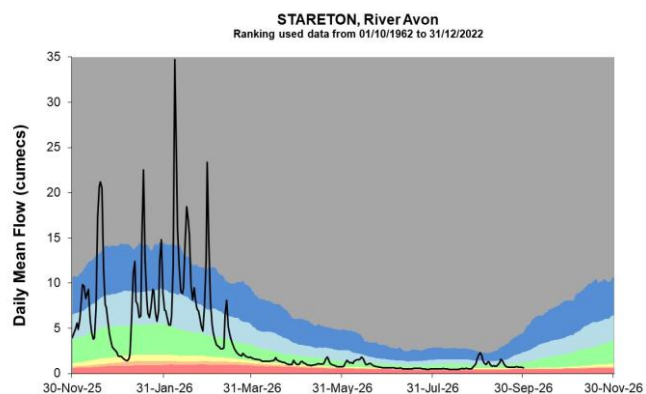
(Source: Environment Agency, 2026). Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

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.





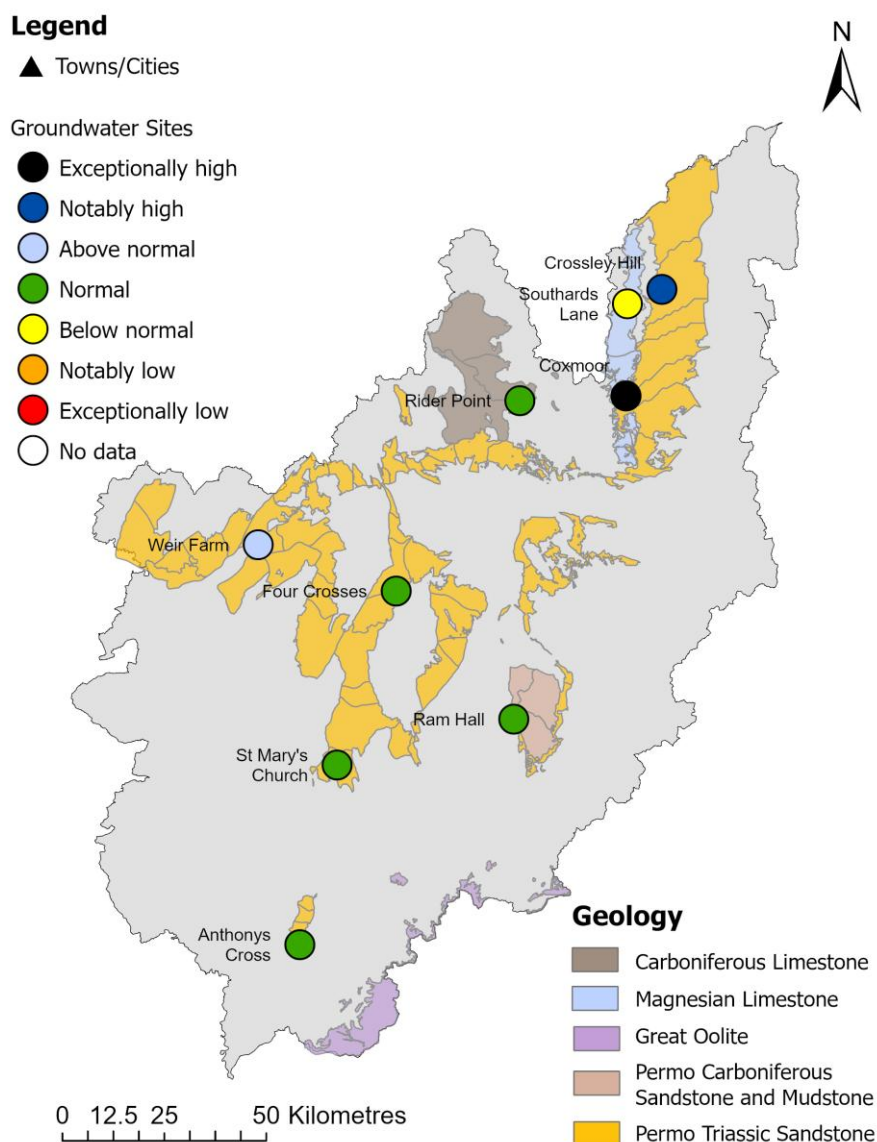


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

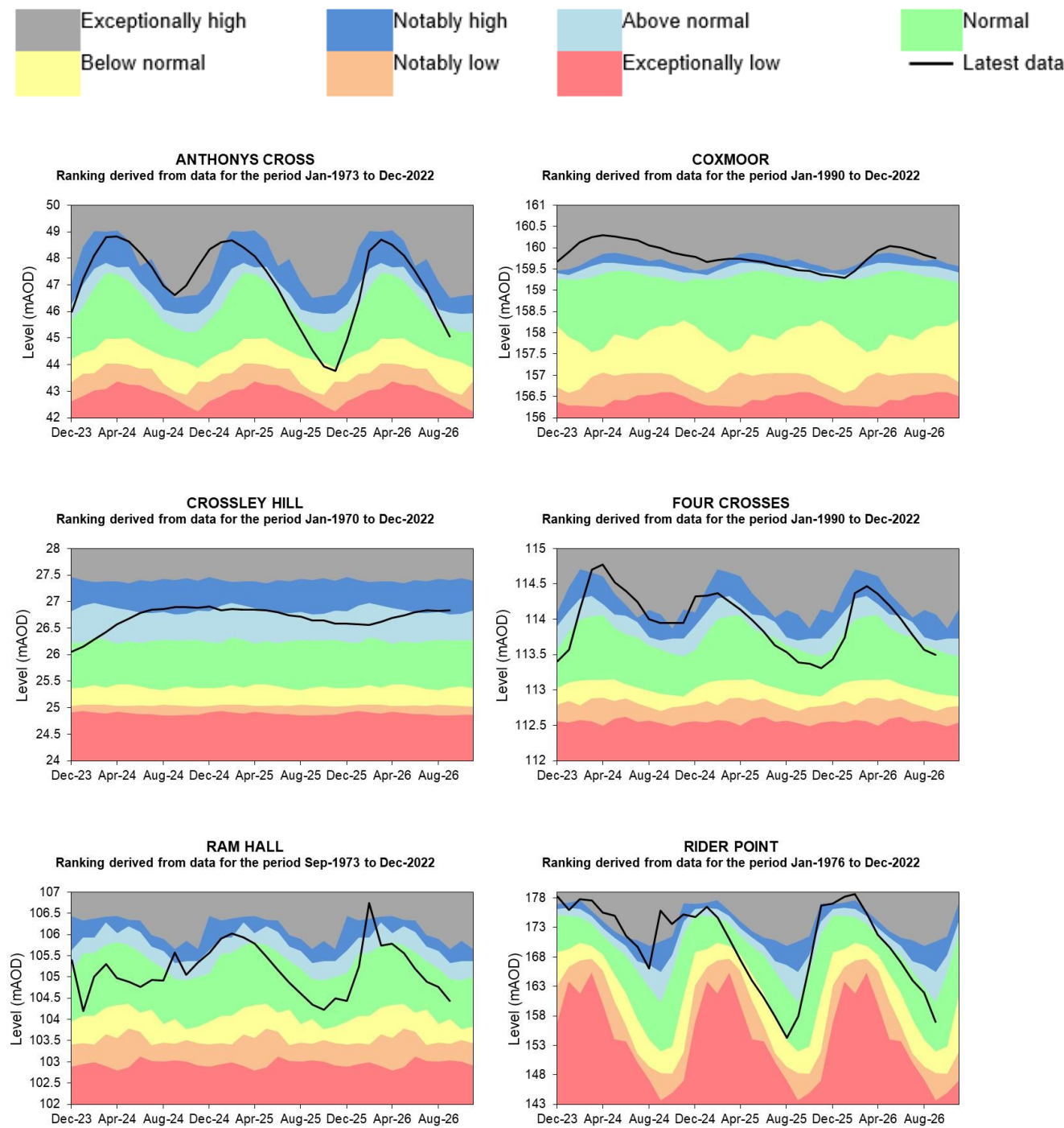
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of September 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic September levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information, including aquifer type.

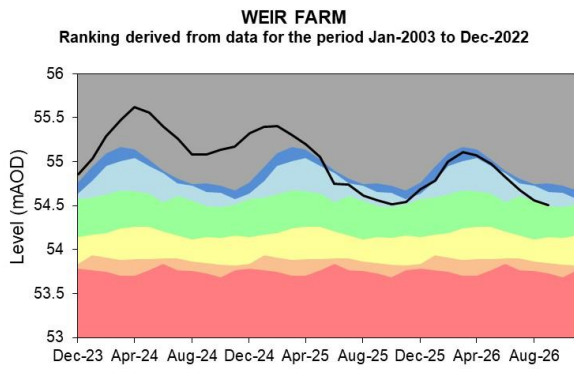
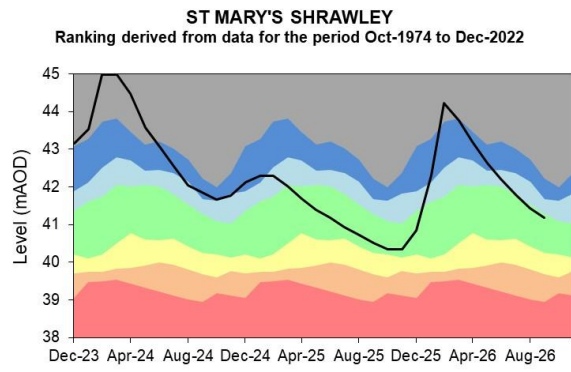
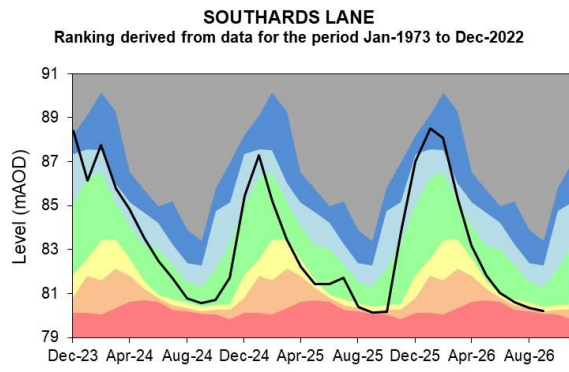


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

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.

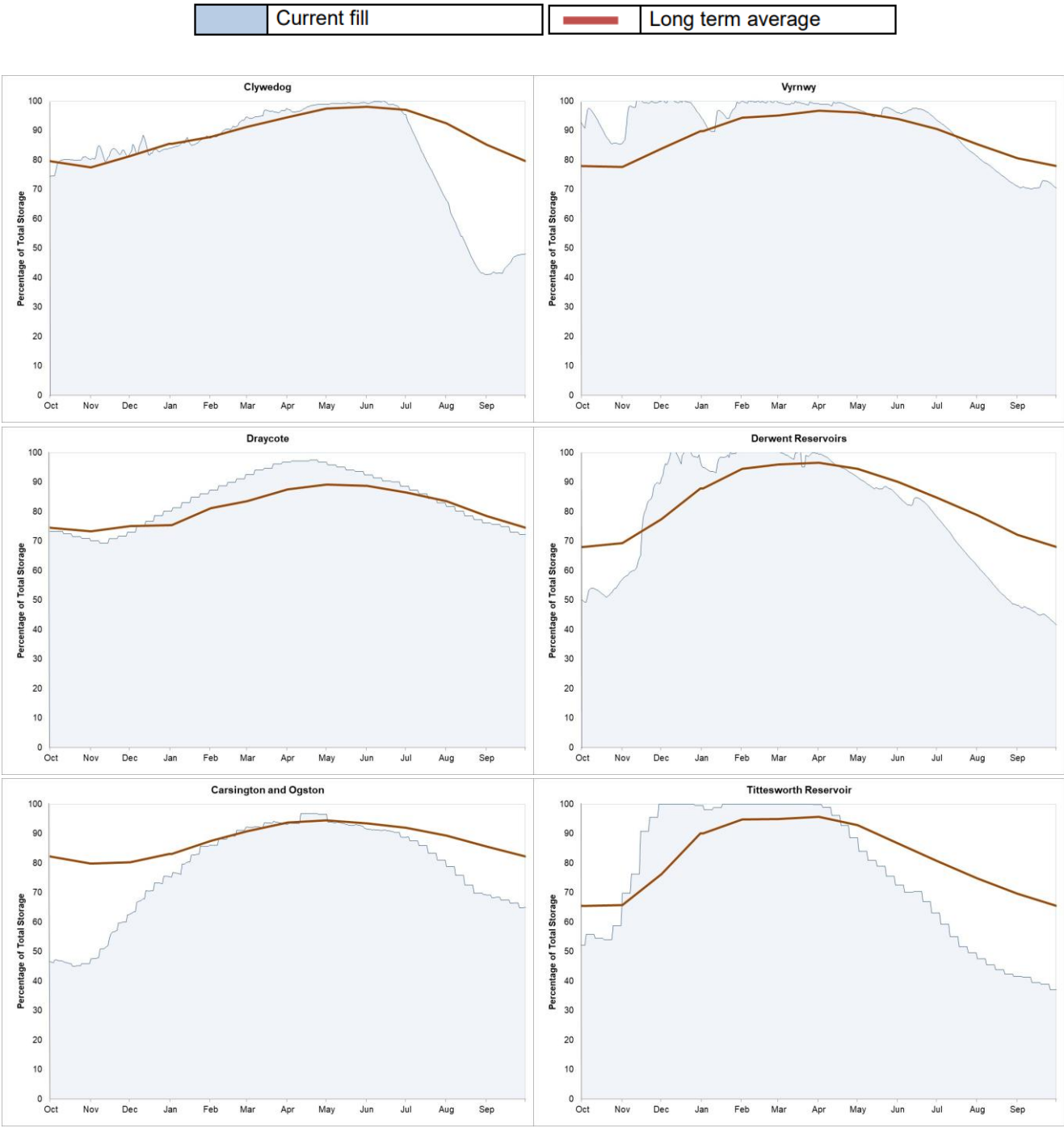


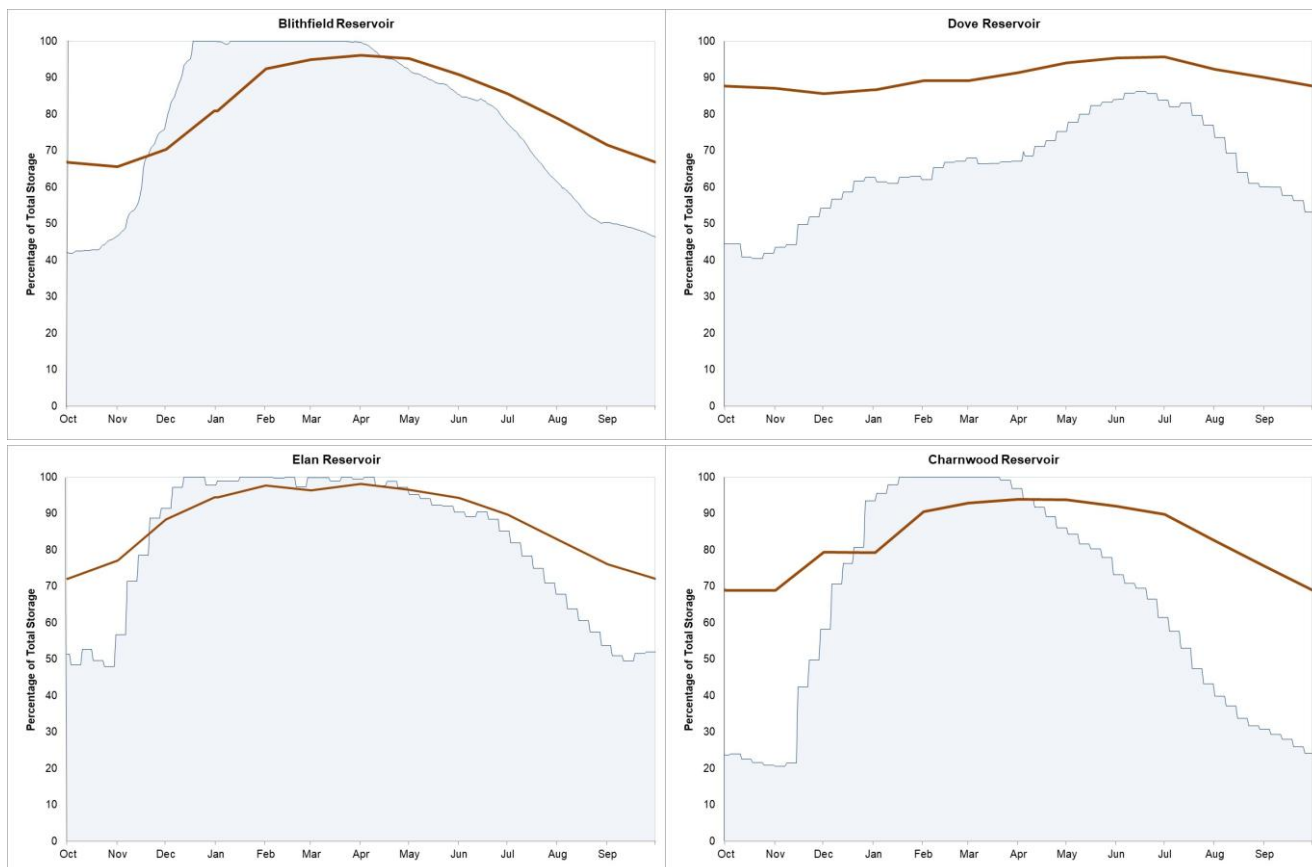


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month reservoir stocks compared to long term average stocks. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the 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 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

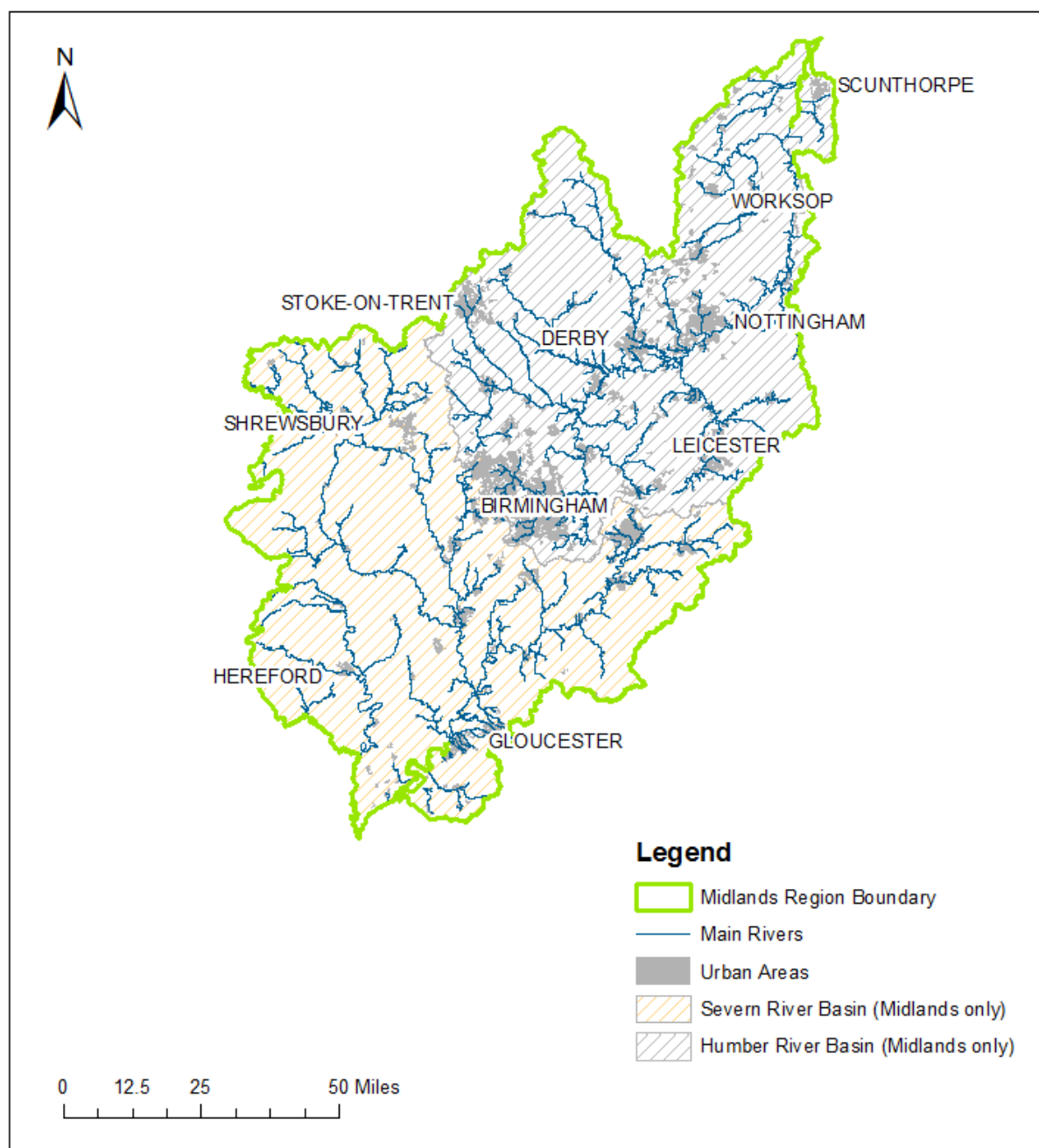
Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

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

7.3 Midlands regional coverage

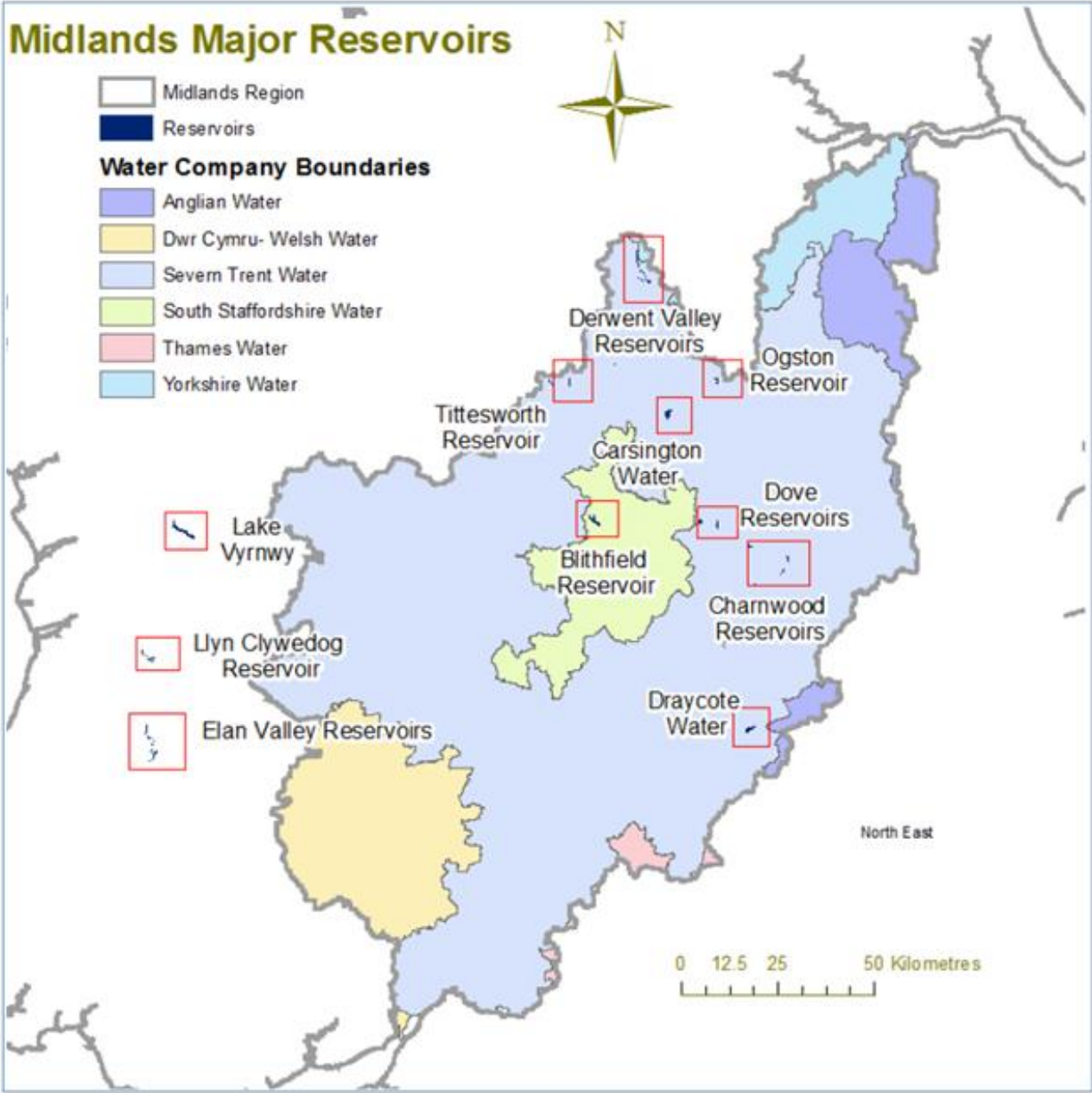
Figure 7.3: The Midlands regional boundary and the hydrological boundaries of the River Severn and River Trent.



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7.4 Midlands major reservoirs

Figure 7.4: Location of major reservoirs in the Midlands.



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8 Appendices

8.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Sep 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Sep 2026 band	Jul 2026 to September cumulative band	Apr 2026 to September cumulative band	Oct 2025 to September cumulative band
Avon To Evesham	57	Below Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Normal
Derwent (Midlands)	77	Normal	Below normal	Below normal	Notably high
Dove	76	Normal	Notably low	Below normal	Above normal
Lower Severn Estuary	65	Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Normal
Lower Trent	41	Below Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Above normal
Lower Wye	69	Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Normal
Mid Severn	68	Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Normal
Shropshire Plains	68	Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Normal
Soar	49	Below Normal	Notably low	Exceptionally low	Normal

Hydrological area	Sep 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Sep 2026 band	Jul 2026 to September cumulative band	Apr 2026 to September cumulative band	Oct 2025 to September cumulative band
Tame	63	Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Notably high
Upper Trent	79	Normal	Notably low	Notably low	Above normal
Welsh Mountains	99	Normal	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low	Normal

8.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Sep 2026 band	Aug 2026 band
Auckley	Torne	Torne	Normal	Normal
Bewdley	Severn	Severn Lower Mid	Below normal	Exceptionally low
Butts Bridge	Lugg	Lugg	Below normal	Notably low
Clifton Hall	River Mease	Mease	No data	Normal
Deerhurst	Severn	Severn Lower	Normal	Below normal
Derby St. Marys	Derwent	Derwent Der to Markeaton confl.	Below normal	Normal
Ebley Mill	Frome (Gloucs.)	Frome Gloucs.	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Evesham	Avon (Midlands)	Avon Warwks Lower	Normal	Normal
Great Bridgeford	Sow	Sow Upper	Below normal	Below normal
Kegworth	Soar	Soar to Kingston Brook confl.	Below normal	Below normal
Llanyblodwel	Tanat	Severn Upper River Tanat	Below normal	Exceptionally low
Marston On Dove	Dove (Midlands)	Dove Derb to Hilton Br confl.	Below normal	Below normal
North Muskham	Trent	Trent to Cromwell	Normal	Below normal

Site name	River	Catchment	Sep 2026 band	Aug 2026 band
Redbrook	Wye (Herefordshire)	Wye H and W d s Lugg	Below normal	Exceptionally low
Stareton	Avon (Midlands)	Avon Warwks Upper	Normal	Below normal
Tenbury	Teme	Teme	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Walcot	Tern	Tern	Below normal	Below normal
Wedderburn Bridge	Leadon	Leadon	No data	No data
Whatstandwell	Derwent	Derwent Derb to Amber confl.	Below normal	Below normal
Worksop	Ryton	Ryton Upper to Oldcoates Dyke	Normal	Normal
Yoxall	Trent	Trent to Tame Mease confl.	Below normal	Below normal

8.3 Groundwater table

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