Monthly water situation report: Midlands

1 Summary - October 2026

October was a wetter month than September, with the Midlands receiving 102% of the long-term average (LTA) rainfall. All hydrological areas recorded normal rainfall totals during the month, with the majority receiving greater than 100% of their October LTA. Soil moisture deficits (SMDs) decreased throughout October, with soils becoming progressively wetter through the month, but drier than expected for the time of year. River flows for half of sites recorded normal monthly mean flows, 3 sites were below normal, Ebley Mill recorded notably low and Tenbury exceptionally low. Groundwater levels continued to be normal or higher at all sites except Southards Lane, where levels were exceptionally low. Reservoir storage levels remained below average for the time of year at all reservoirs, except Vyrnwy. Storage levels increased at most reservoirs at the end of October, with the exception of Draycote and Dove reservoirs which continue to decrease.

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

1.1 Rainfall

An average of 78.8 mm of rain fell across the Midlands in October, equating to 102% of the LTA. All hydrological areas recorded normal rainfall totals in October. 8 out of 12 hydrological areas recorded over 100% of their October LTA, with the Lower Wye recording the lowest LTA percentage of 88%.

Over the past 3 months, all hydrological catchments recorded normal rainfall totals, except the Lower Wye which recorded below normal rainfall totals.

Over the past 6 months, 5 out of 12 hydrological catchments recorded notably low rainfall totals. These were the Avon, Lower Wye, Mid Severn/Teme, Welsh Mountains, Shropshire Plains. A further 4 catchments recorded below normal rainfall amounts including the Lower Trent, Soar, Tame, and Lower Severn. While the remaining 3 catchments recorded normal rainfall totals.

Over the past 12 months, 6 out of 12 hydrological catchments recorded above normal rainfall totals. The Tame catchment recorded notably high rainfall amounts, and a further 5 catchments recorded normal rainfall totals.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

Throughout October, SMD values have been decreasing (soils got wetter). However, SMD levels got slightly higher (soils got drier) over the transition period into November. At the end of the month the majority of hydrological areas had an actual SMD value of between 41 mm and 70 mm. The Lower Trent and Soar hydrological catchments had an actual SMD value of between 71 mm and 100 mm. The Welsh Mountains had the lowest actual SMD value of between 11 mm and 40 mm. Compared with the LTA, most hydrological areas recorded SMDs that were 6 mm to 25 mm higher, indicating drier than average. The Mid Severn/Teme and Lower Wye, in the south-west of the Midlands, recorded a 26 mm to 50 mm higher SMD compared to its October LTA.

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

1.3 River flows

More than half of flow sites in October recorded normal monthly mean flows. Three sites, 1 in the East Midlands and 2 in the West Midlands recorded below normal flows. Ebley Mill in the south recorded notably low flows, and Tenbury in the west recorded exceptionally low flows.

Wedderburn Bridge continues to have data issues and has been excluded from this report. Clifton Hall has also been experiencing data issues this month and has therefore been excluded from this October 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 October, 6 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 exceptionally low groundwater levels. Also in the north, but over sandstone geology, Crossley Hill recorded notably high groundwater levels, and Coxmoor exceptionally high groundwater levels.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

Nine out of 10 reservoirs reported here have below average storage for this time of year, with only Vyrnwy at above LTA storage levels. Storage levels had increased at most Midlands reservoirs by the end of October, although levels at Draycote and Dove continued to decrease. The majority of reservoirs across the Midlands have increased in storage towards the end of October. Draycote and Dove reservoirs are decreasing in storage levels. By the end of October, reservoir storage in the Midlands ranged from 21.4% to 84.3% 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 31 October 2026, there have been 93 days of Severn Regulation so far. 7 out of 31 days in October were regulation days and regulation releases were made on the last day of October.

Table 1.1: River Severn operational releases on 31st October 2026

Water supply (Ml/d)	Total releases	Normal releases	Regulation releases	Flood drawdown releases
Llyn Clywedog	18 Ml/d	18 Ml/d	0 Ml/d	0
Lake Vyrnwy	405 Ml/d	22 Ml/d	0 Ml/d	383 Ml/d
Shropshire Groundwater scheme	0 Ml/d	N/A	0 Ml/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. Flows rose above the threshold at Redbrook towards the end of the month and releases were ceased. Regulation releases occured from 1 October 2026 to 9 October 2026, and then from 14 October 2026 to 23 October 2026. Regulation releases ceased on 24 October 2026 and for the rest of the month.

1.9 Water abstraction restrictions

As of 31 October 2026 there are 26 water abstraction licence restrictions in place across the Midlands affecting 39 licences in total.

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

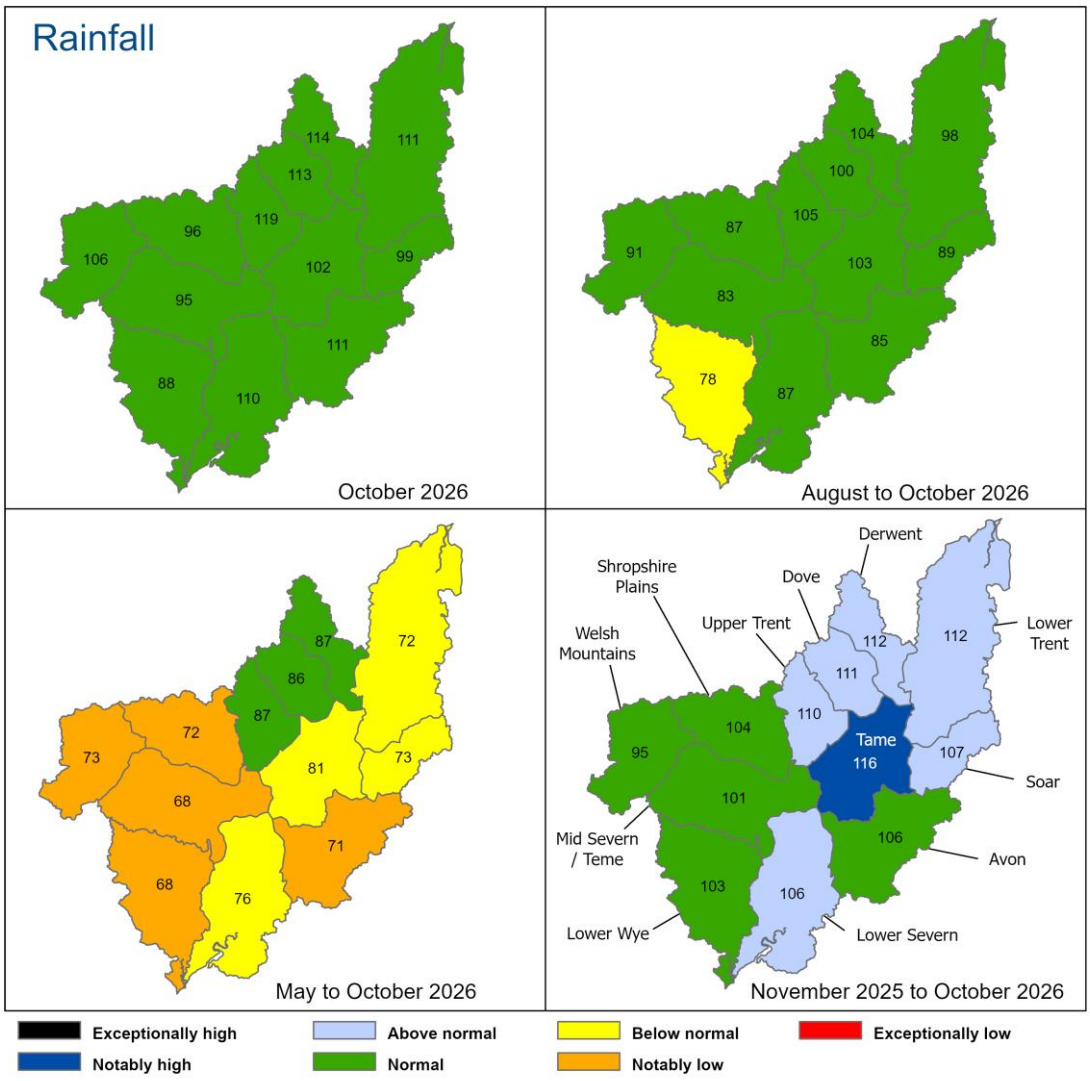
Contact Details: 03708 506 506

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 reliance upon views contained in this report.

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

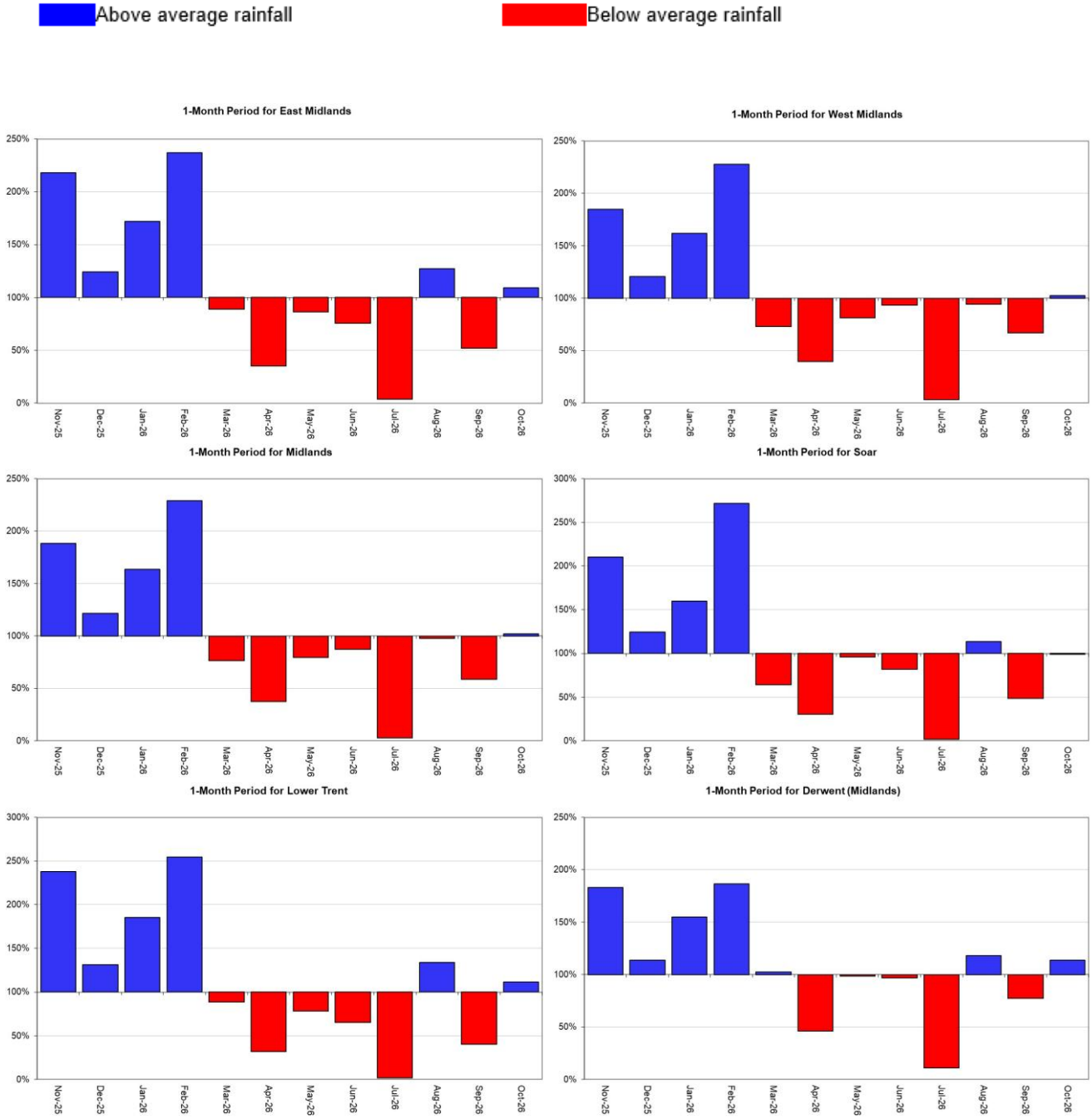
Figure 2.1: Rainfall as % LTA for hydrological areas for the current month (up to 31 October 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic totals from 1991 to 2020. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

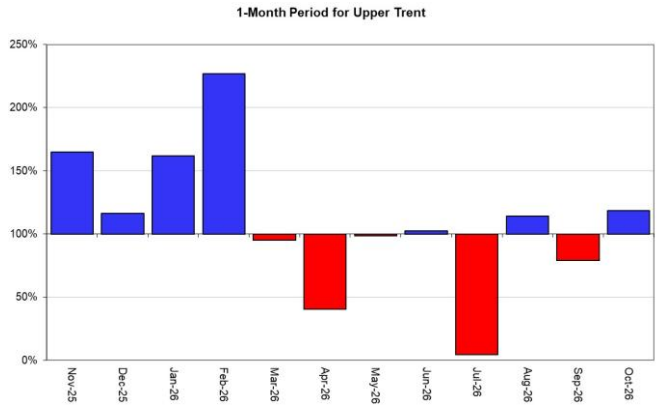


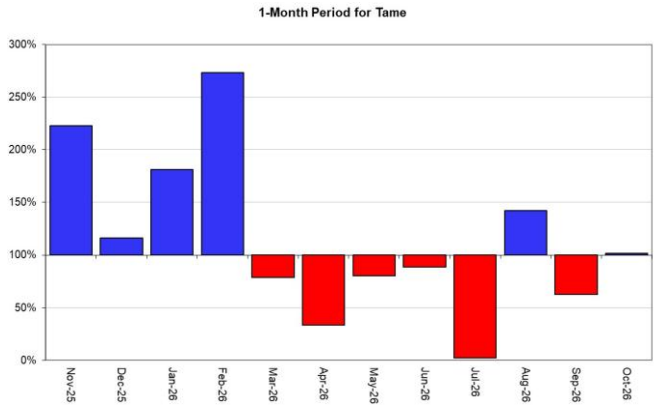
Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

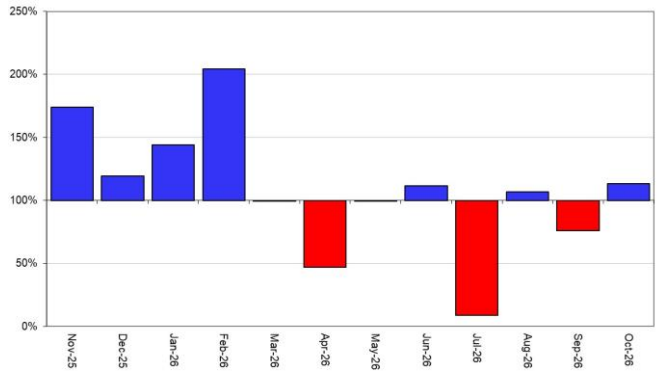
2.2 Rainfall charts

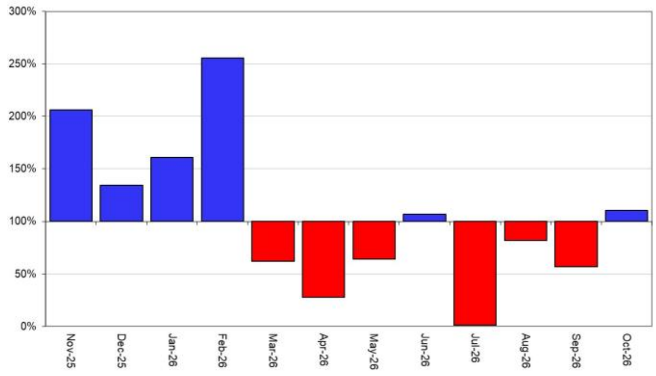
Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for hydrological areas across the Midlands region.

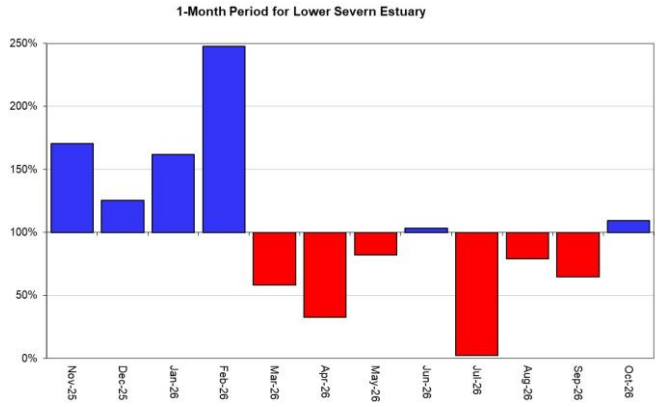


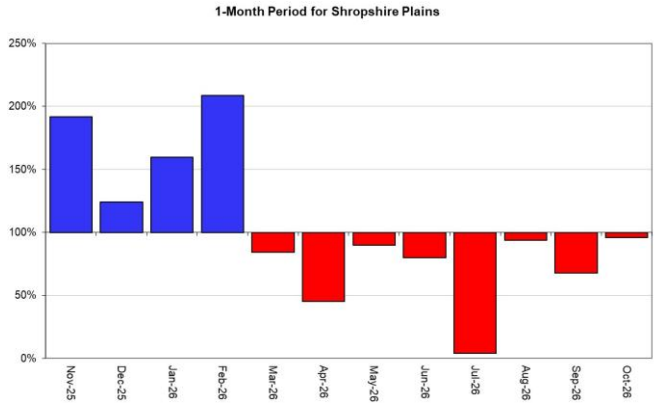

1-Month Period for Upper Trent
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

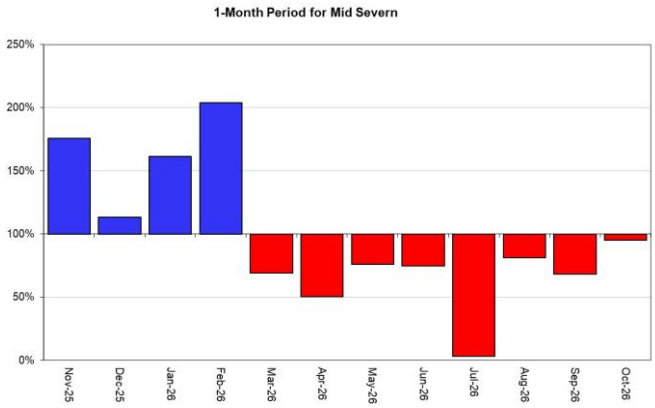

1-Month Period for Tame
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

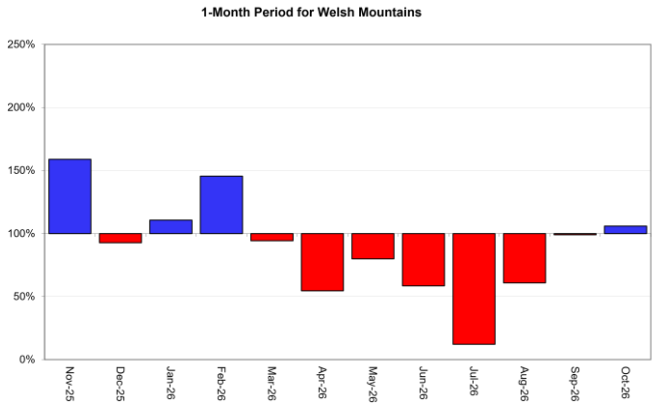

1-Month Period for Dove
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26

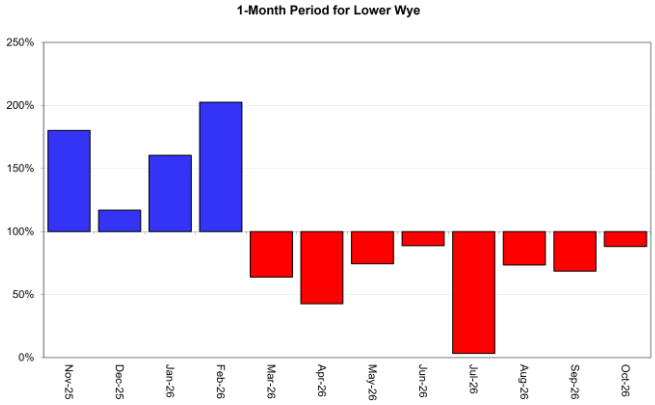

1-Month Period for Avon to Evesham
300%
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26
Aug-26
Sep-26
Oct-26


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


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





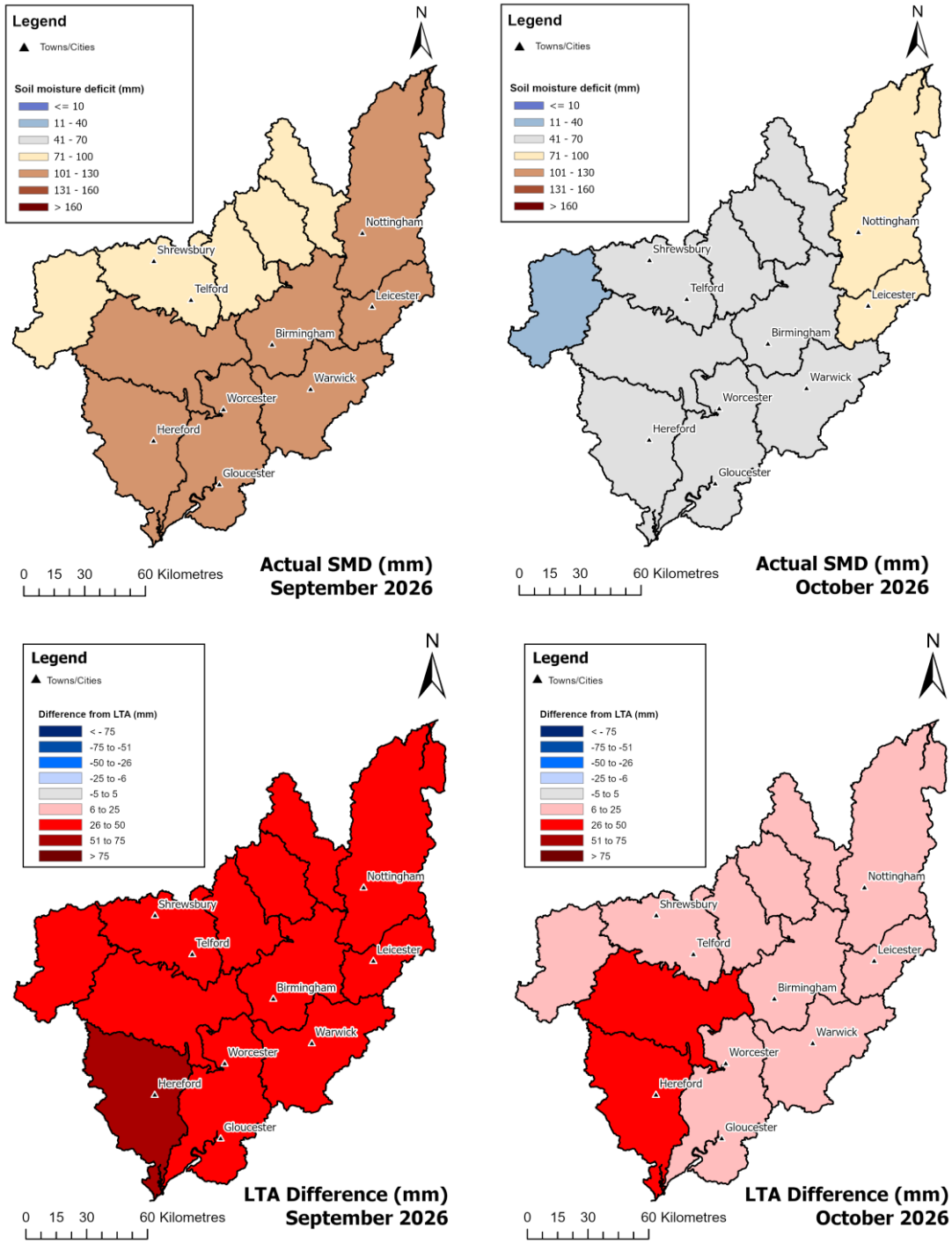


Rainfall data since January 2025, extracted from Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. (Source: Environment Agency. Crown Copyright, AC0000807064, 2026). Rainfall data prior to January 2025, extracted from Met Office HadUK 1km gridded rainfall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

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

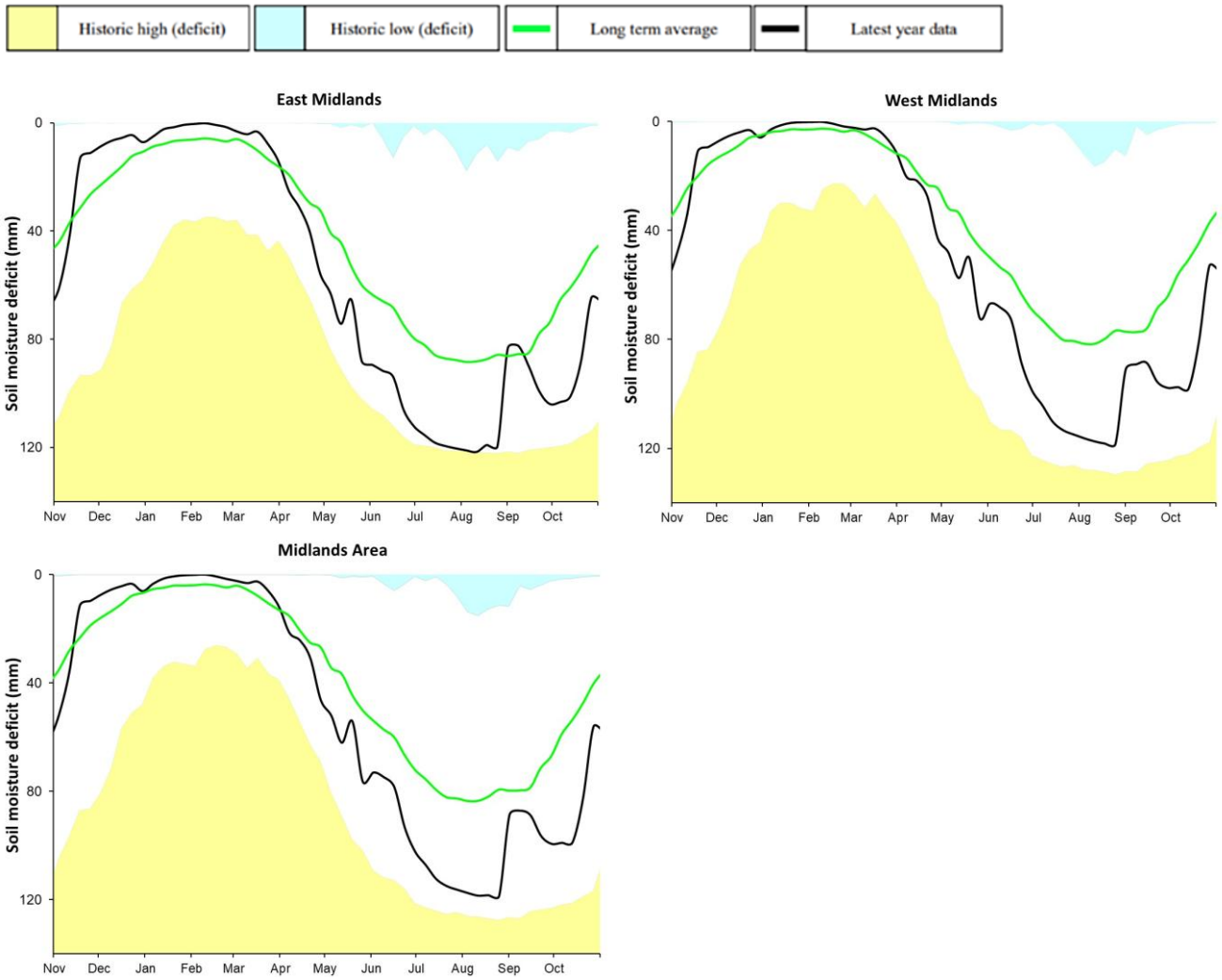
Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficits for weeks ending 31 October 2026 (right pane) and the previous month (left pane). Top row shows actual soil moisture deficits (mm) and bottom row shows the difference (mm) between the actual and the 1991 to 2020 long term average soil moisture deficits. Calculated from 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.

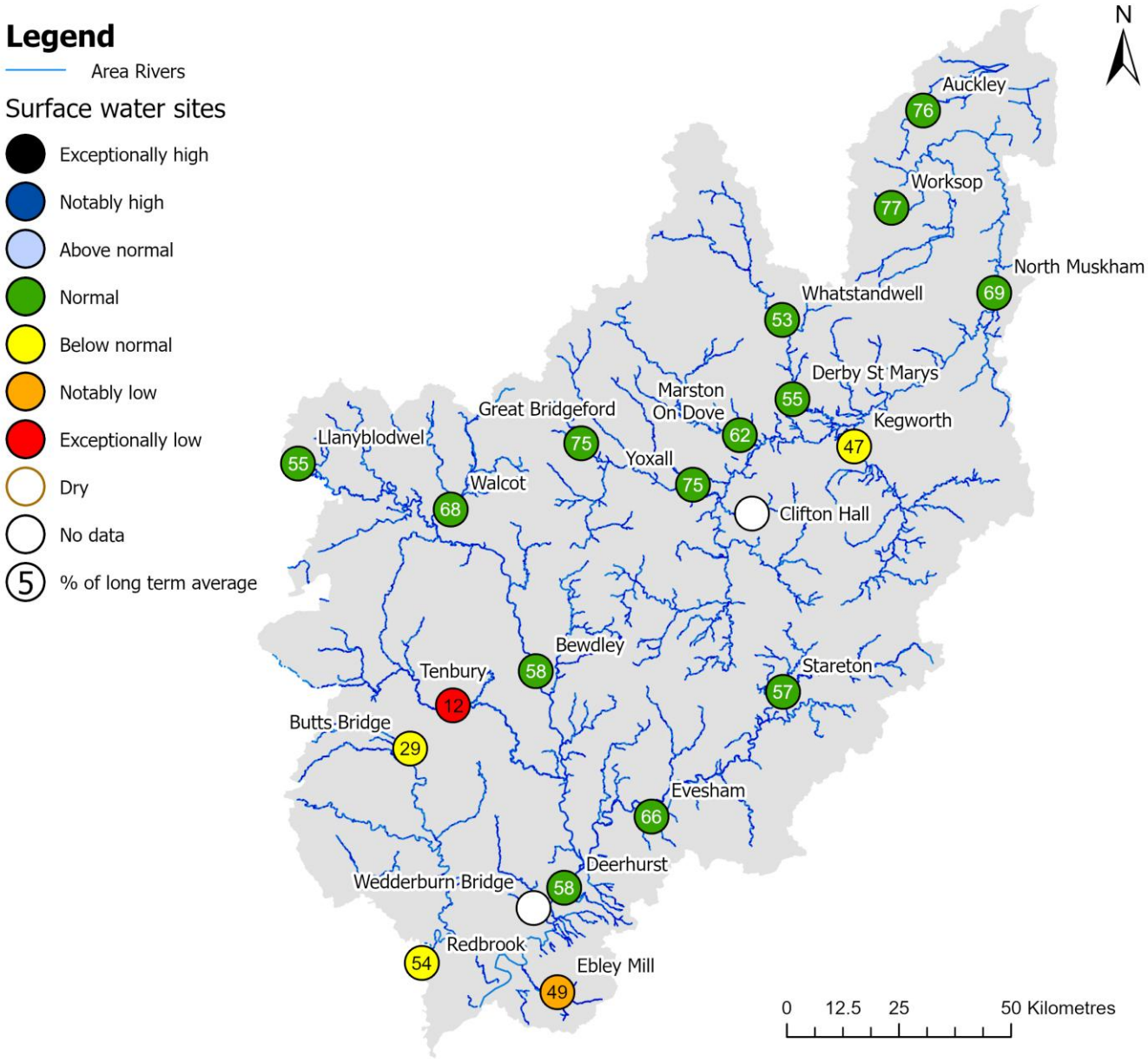


(Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026.) All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

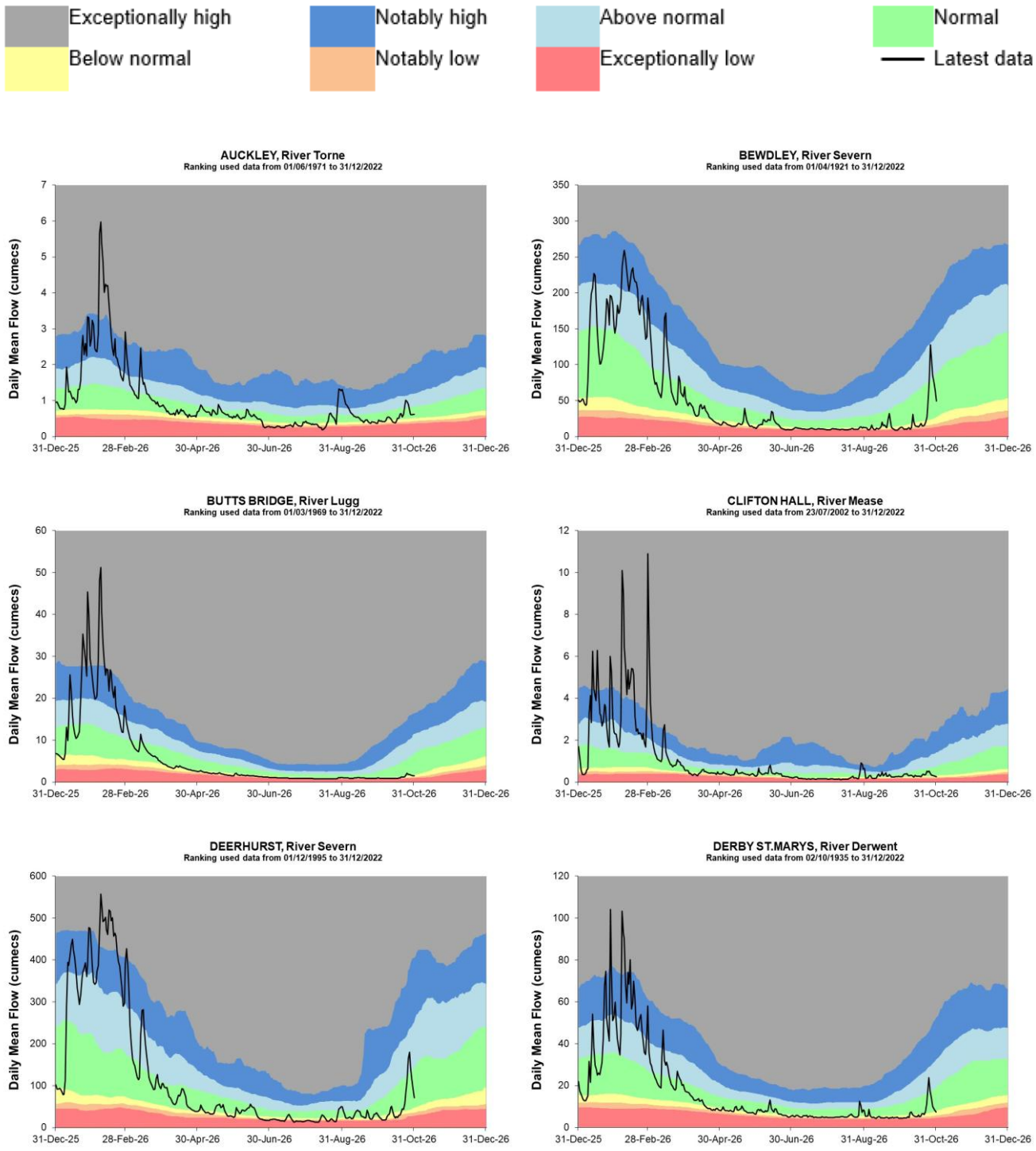
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for October 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic October monthly means. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.



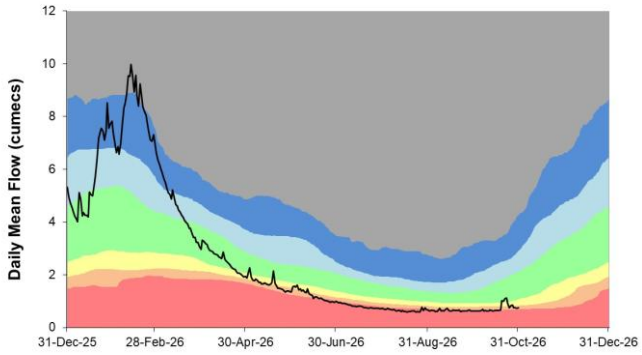
(Source: Environment Agency, 2026). Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

4.2 River flow charts

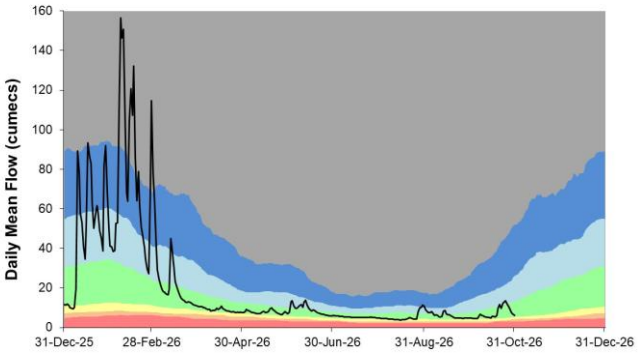
Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows.



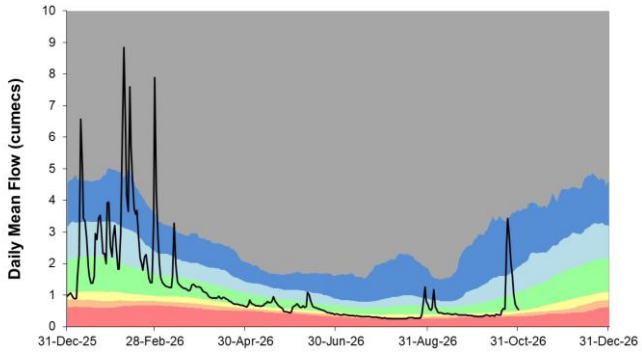
EBLEY MILL, River Frome
Ranking used data from 01/04/1969 to 31/12/2022



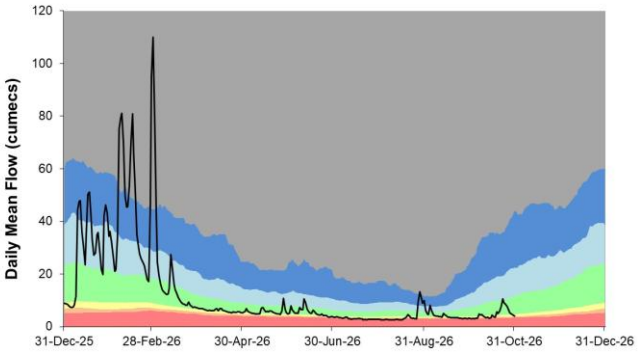
EVESHAM, River Avon
Ranking used data from 01/12/1936 to 31/12/2022



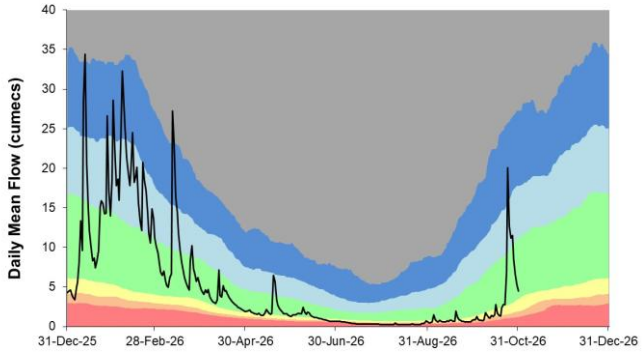
GREAT BRIDGFORD, River Sow
Ranking used data from 18/01/1971 to 31/12/2022



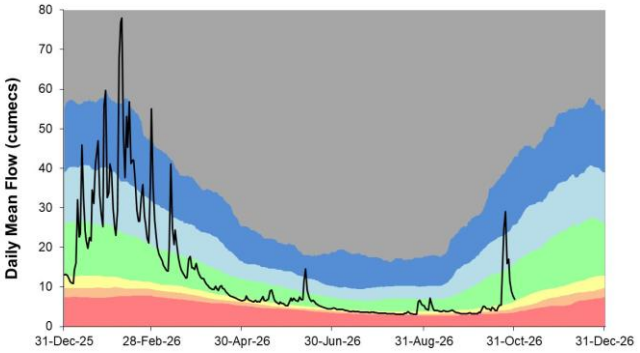
KEGWORTH, River Soar
Ranking used data from 01/12/1978 to 31/12/2022



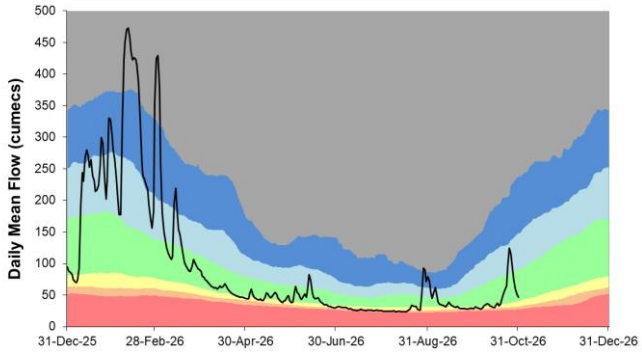
LLANYBLODWEL, Afon Tanat
Ranking used data from 01/06/1973 to 31/12/2022



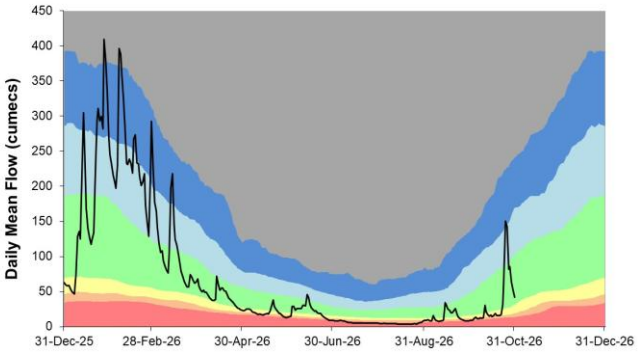
MARSTON ON DOVE, River Dove
Ranking used data from 01/07/1965 to 31/12/2022

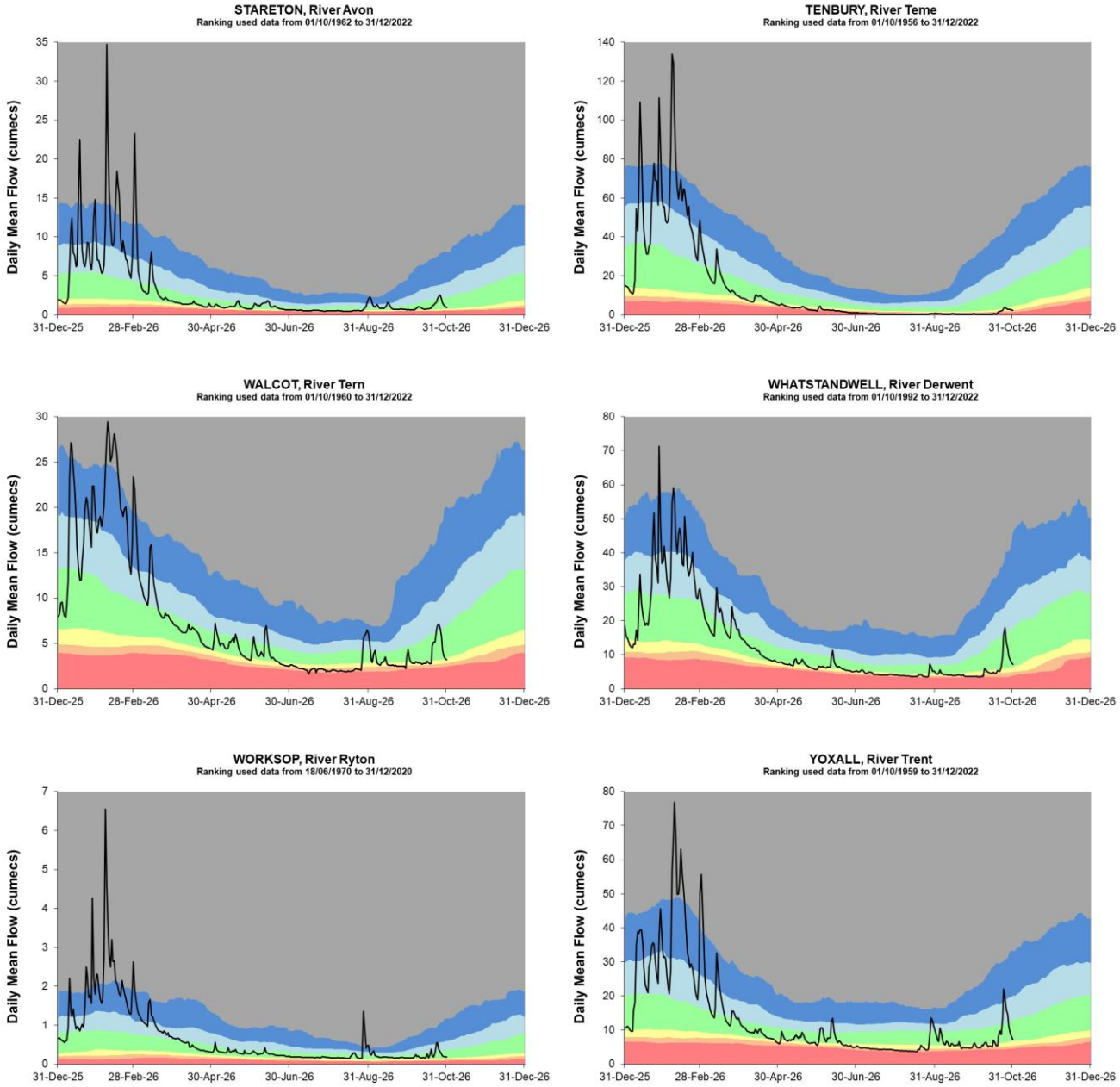


NORTH MUSKHAM, River Trent
Ranking used data from 03/10/1969 to 31/12/2022



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



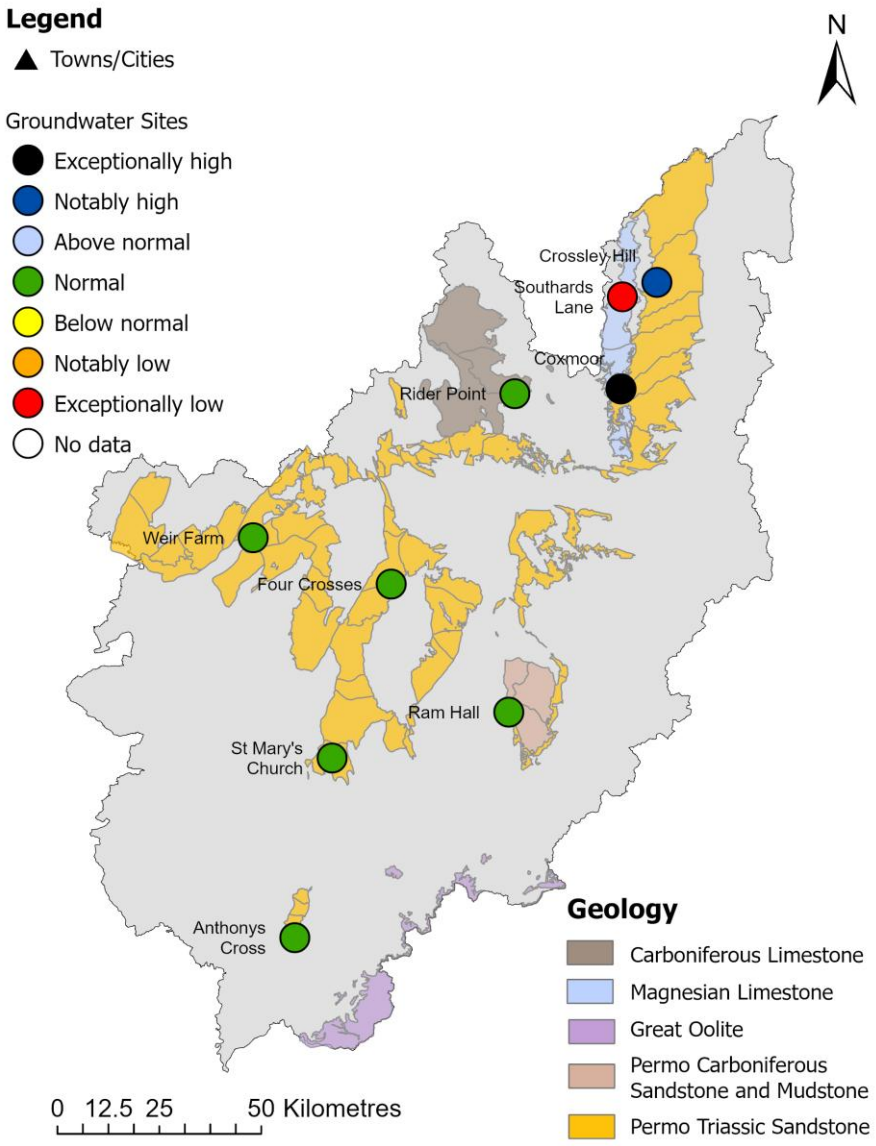


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

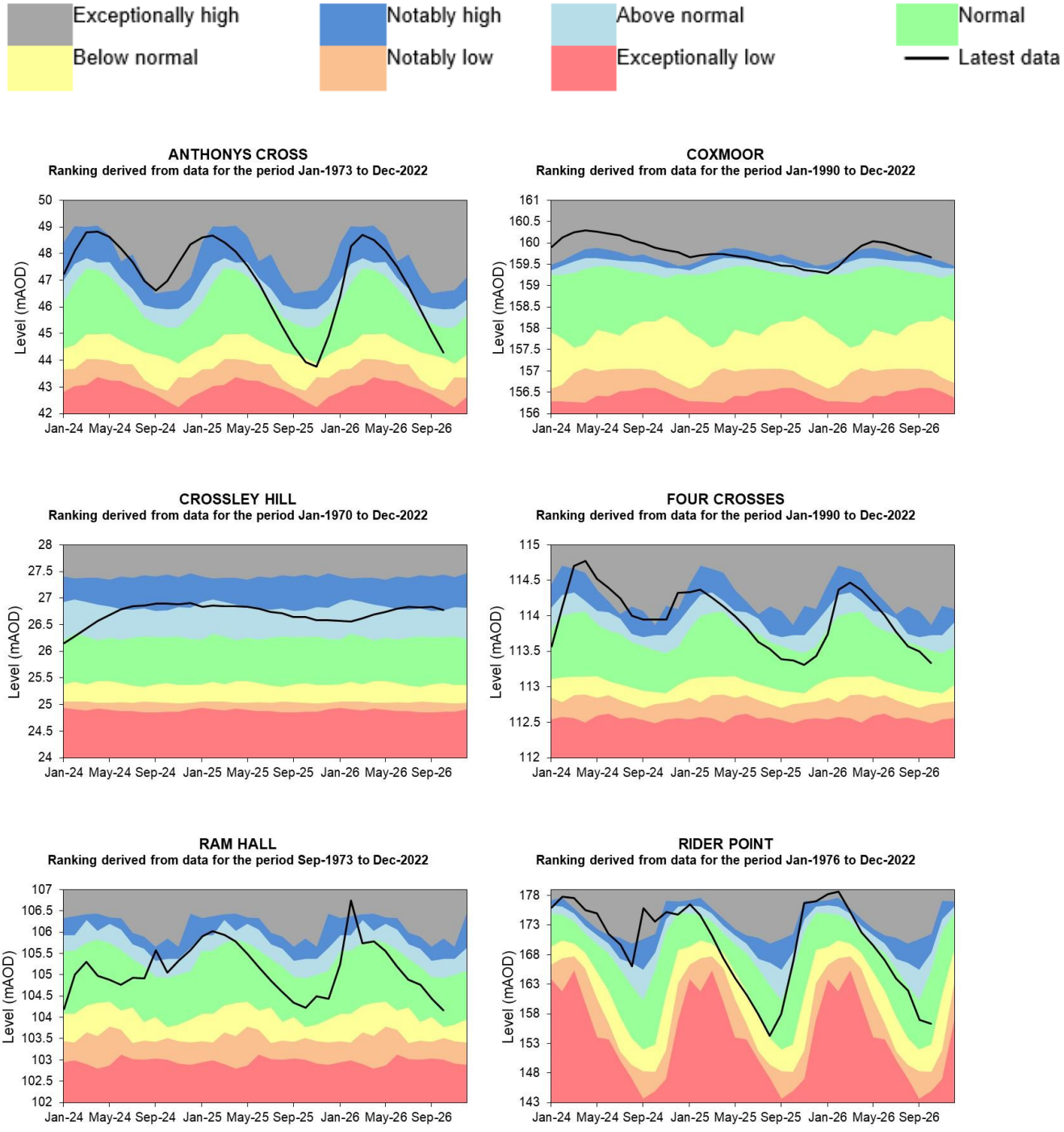
Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of October 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic October levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information, including aquifer type.

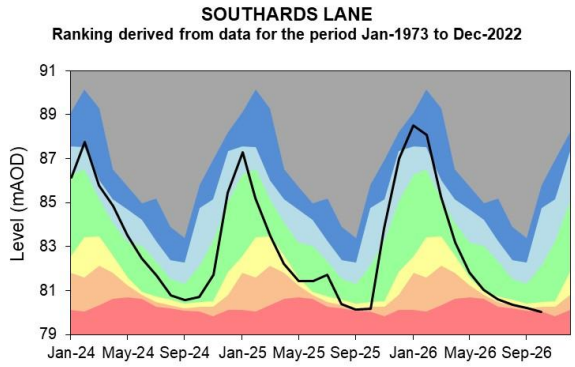


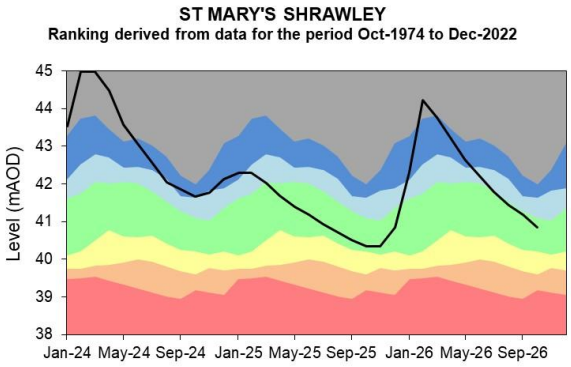
(Source: Environment Agency, 2026). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, AC0000807064, 2026.

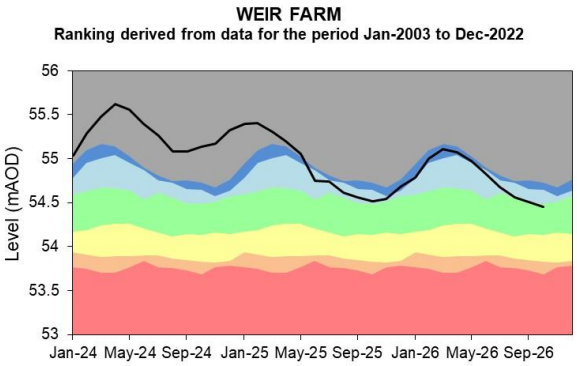
5.2 Groundwater level charts

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.





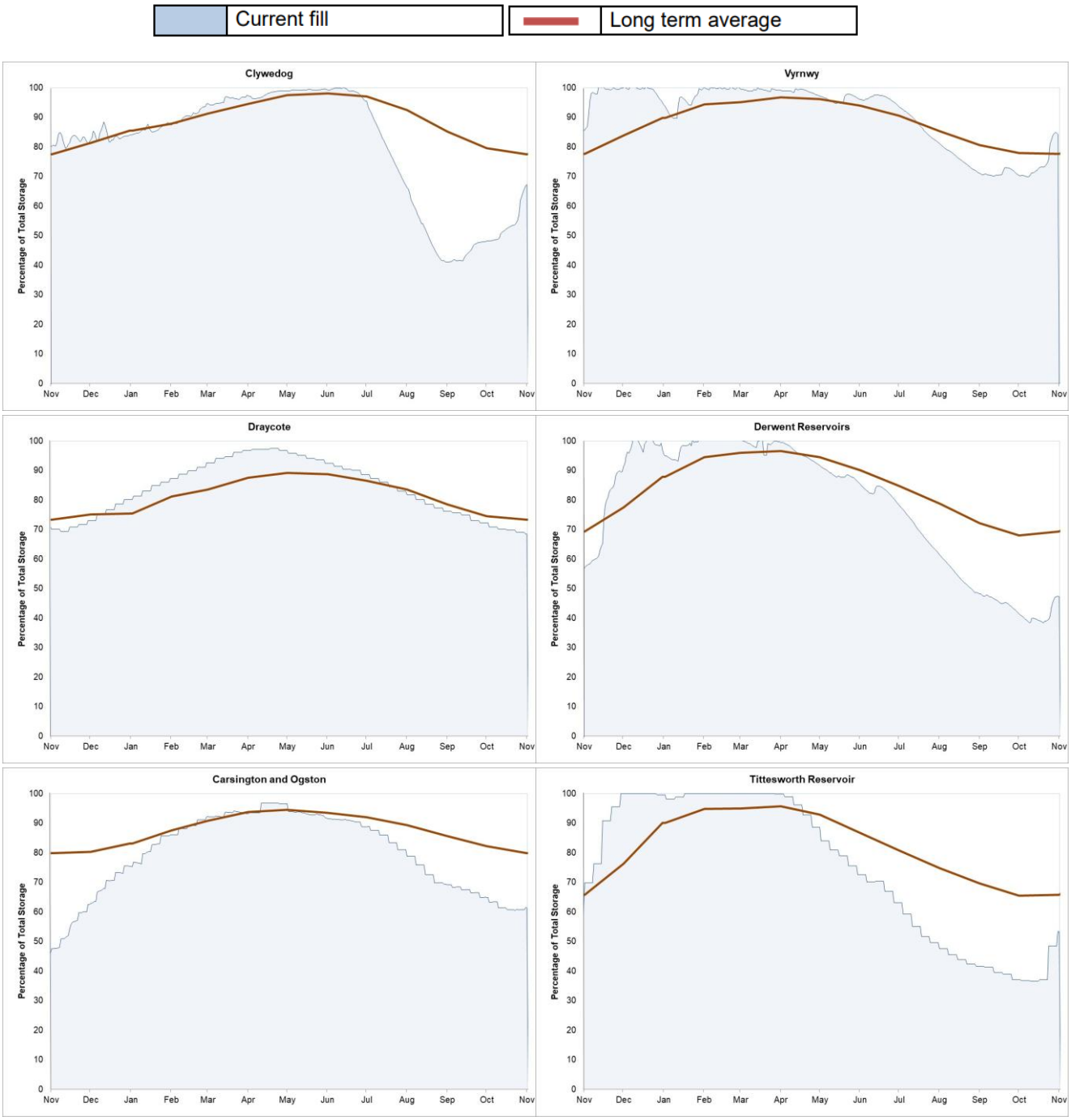


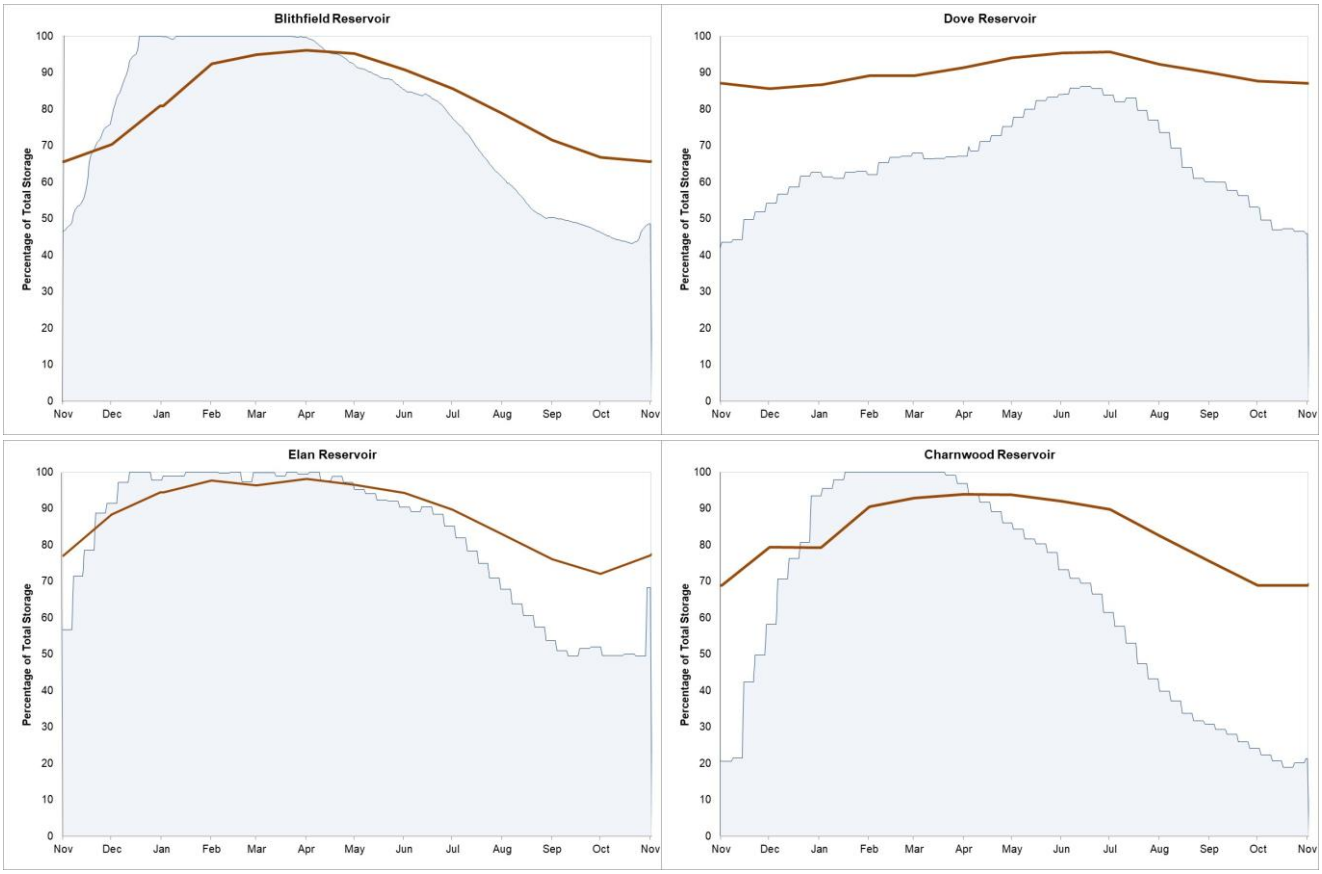


(Source: Environment Agency, 2026).

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

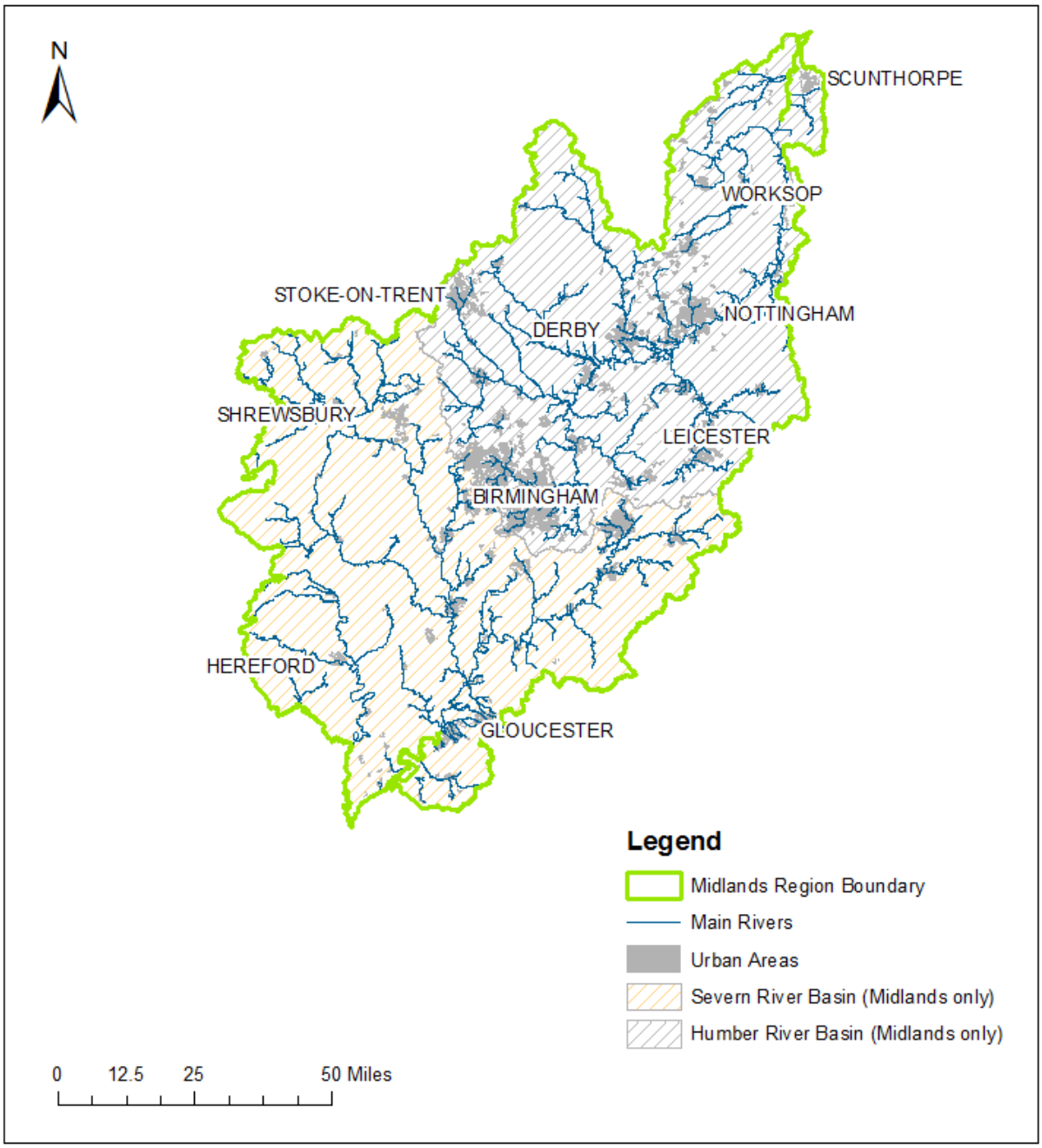
Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

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

7.3 Midlands regional coverage

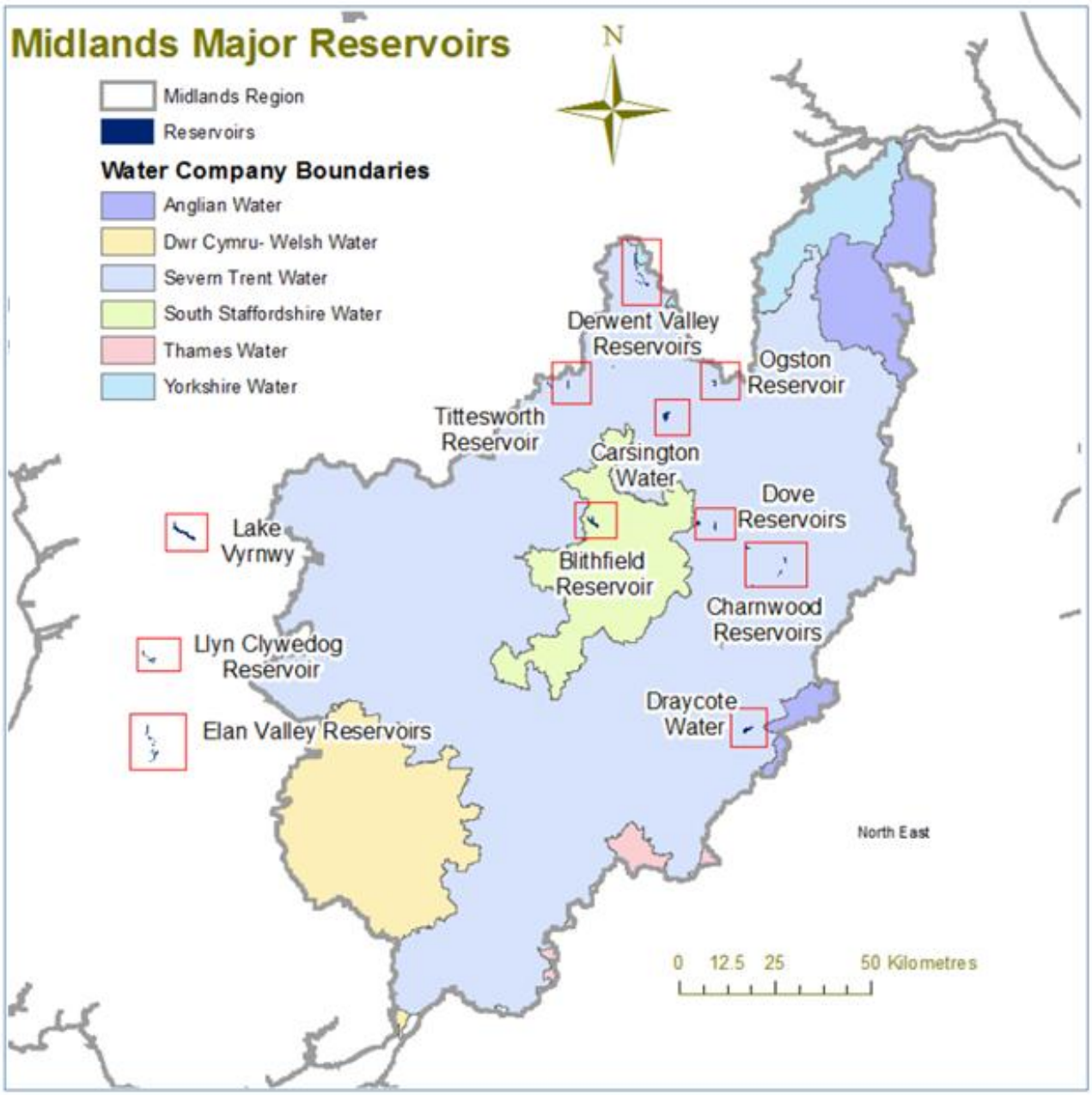
Figure 7.3: The Midlands regional boundary and the hydrological boundaries of the River Severn and River Trent.



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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	Oct 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Oct 2026 band	Aug 2026 to October cumulative band	May 2026 to October cumulative band	Nov 2025 to October cumulative band
Avon To Evesham	111	Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Derwent (Midlands)	114	Normal	Normal	Normal	Above normal
Dove	113	Normal	Normal	Normal	Above normal
Lower Severn Estuary	110	Normal	Normal	Below normal	Above normal
Lower Trent	111	Normal	Normal	Below normal	Above normal
Lower Wye	88	Normal	Below normal	Notably low	Normal
Mid Severn	95	Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Shropshire Plains	96	Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal
Soar	99	Normal	Normal	Below normal	Above normal
Tame	102	Normal	Normal	Below normal	Notably high

Hydrological area	Oct 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Oct 2026 band	Aug 2026 to October cumulative band	May 2026 to October cumulative band	Nov 2025 to October cumulative band
Upper Trent	119	Normal	Normal	Normal	Above normal
Welsh Mountains	106	Normal	Normal	Notably low	Normal

8.2 River flows table

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

Site name	River	Catchment	Oct 2026 band	Sep 2026 band
Redbrook	Wye (Herefordshire)	Wye H and W d s Lugg	Below normal	Below normal
Stareton	Avon (Midalnds)	Avon Warwks Upper	Normal	Normal
Tenbury	Teme	Teme	Exceptionally low	Exceptionally low
Walcot	Tern	Tern	Normal	Below normal
Wedderburn Bridge	Leadon	Leadon		
Whatstandwell	Derwent	Derwent Derb to Amber confl.	Normal	Below normal
Worksop	Ryton	Ryton Upper to Oldcoates Dyke	Normal	Normal
Yoxall	Trent	Trent to Tame Mease confl.	Normal	Below normal

8.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Oct 2026 band	End of Sep 2026 band
Anthonys Cross	Severn Vale Permo Triassic Sandstone	Normal	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	Exceptionally low	Below normal
St Mary's Church, Shrawley	Triassic Sandstone	Normal	Normal
Weir Farm	Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation	Normal	Above normal