



2. You have a reliable supply of water now and in the future

What do customers want?

Our customers want to rely on us to provide enough water to meet their current and future needs. We want to improve the reliability of the water we supply, reducing both short-term interruptions and the risk of longer-term interruptions. We are focusing on reducing leaks and encouraging water efficiency, which research has shown to be high priorities for customers.

We have made 11 performance commitments about the reliability of the water supply and we have achieved nine of these in year three.

What have we done?

In year three we have met our leakage target for the 17th year running. We are on track for a 15% reduction over AMP7, using a mix of traditional and innovative techniques.

In year three we did not meet our supply-interruption target of 5 minutes and 45 seconds for the average time that customers were without a water supply. Our performance of 38 minutes 45 seconds was affected by weather events this year.

During the summer there was a long period of dry weather which caused more leaks and bursts than usual due to soil drying out and ground movement. In December 2022, freezing temperatures lasting more than nine days were followed by a sharp increase in temperature. This caused a rapid thaw, resulting in lots of bursts and leaks across our water network and on customer properties. (We call this a freeze-thaw event.) This was the worst freeze-thaw event we have experienced in recent history. We continue to focus on events that lead to a loss of supply and restoring water supplies to minimise interruptions to customers. Around 30% of water lost from leaks comes from homes and gardens. We provide information and 'how to' videos on our website, to help customers prevent, identify and fix leaks.

As described above, the dry weather followed by the freeze-thaw event increased the number of mains repairs to 111.6 repairs per 1,000 km of mains in year three. This was higher than in year two, although we still met our target of 116.6 repairs per 1,000 km of mains. The number of properties on the low-water-pressure register slightly increased compared with year two. We delivered a performance of 0.462 customers with low pressure per 10,000 connected properties, beating our target of 0.670.

We improved performance against our resilience metrics, which measure how well we take steps to maintain essential services in a range of circumstances.

The average amount of water each person in our region uses each day is measured as 'per capita consumption' (PCC). We continue to work with customers to help them understand how to use water efficiently and make informed choices where possible. This includes sending out information on using water efficiently and promoting the use of water meters, including through our 'lowest bill guarantee'. In year three, the amount of water used, on average, per person reduced compared with the previous year. We did not meet our three-year rolling average target, which was to reduce reported usage by 3.9% compared with a starting position (set at the start of the AMP) of 144 litres per person per day. Our performance in year three was calculated to be 0.5% above this (or 144.7 litres per person per day). However, we continued to see a reduction in PCC, with a performance of 140 litres per person per day in 2022/23.

Over AMP7, we are aiming to achieve further reductions in PCC. We will focus on providing more communications to customers to help them understand about their water use and how to reduce it, and increasing the number of households with a water meter, to support and encourage people to make changes to their behaviour in order to reduce the amount of water they use.

 unitedutilities.com/help-and-support/your-water-supply/your-pipes/leakage

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measures achieved

