

SUMMARY The outlook for January is for normal river flows and normal to above normal groundwater levels across most of the country, except parts of southeast England where normal to below normal flows and levels are most likely. In these areas, normal to below normal flows and levels may persist through the January-March period. Elsewhere, normal flows and levels will predominate over the next three months except in some northwestern areas where normal to above normal flows are favoured.

Rainfall:

The first half of December was very wet, but the latter half was much drier. The December rainfall was slightly above average for the UK, but some areas were much wetter (e.g. southwest England and south Wales) while parts of Scotland and East Anglia were drier than average. The forecast (issued by the Met Office on 22.12.2025) indicates a slightly greater chance of dry conditions in January, whereas the three-month (January-March) outlook indicates a higher-than-normal chance of being wet. The forecast favours westerly airflows so wetter conditions are most likely to occur in northern and western areas, while the south and east could remain drier.

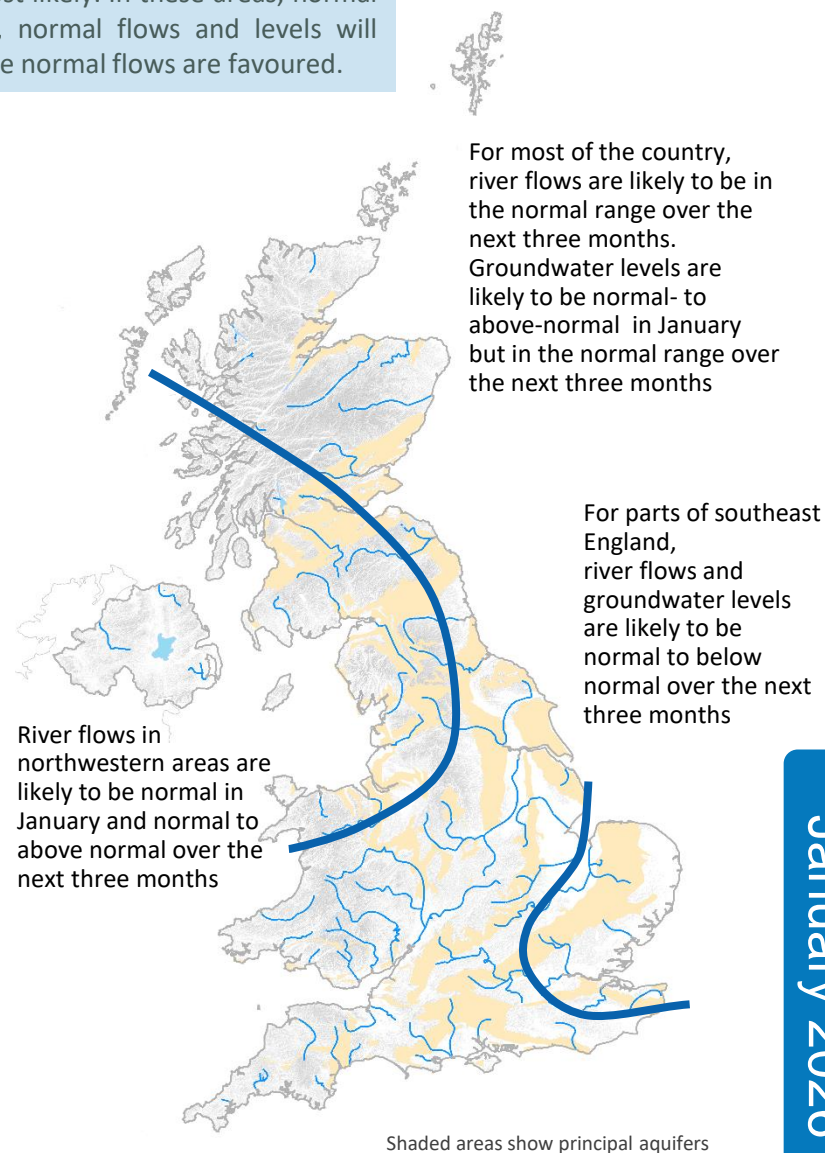
River flows:

December river flows were above normal for the majority of the country, and exceptionally high in some western catchments, reflecting the wet start to the month and the sustained autumn rainfall. The exceptions were northern Scotland and parts of East Anglia and southern England where flows were in the normal range or below. While average flows for December were typically above normal, most rivers receded steeply with the drier late December weather (that extended into early 2026). The outlook for January is for flows to be in the normal range across most of the country, and normal to below normal in parts of southeast and eastern England. The outlook for January-March is for normal flows to predominate, except in parts of northwest Britain where normal to above normal flows are likely, and parts of the southeast where normal to below normal flows are likely to persist.

Groundwater:

Groundwater levels in December were normal to above normal across most aquifer areas, with exceptionally high levels in some northern and central boreholes. Below normal levels were registered in Northern Ireland, parts of Scotland and parts of the Chalk of East Anglia and the North Downs. The January Outlook is for a broadly similar situation, with normal to above normal levels predominant except in parts of the Chalk of southeast England where normal to below normal levels are likely. The January – March outlook indicates a continuation of normal to below normal levels in these areas, but favours normal levels for the rest of the country, although above normal levels may persist in some aquifer areas.

The UK Hydrological Outlook provides an outlook for the water situation for the United Kingdom over the next three months and beyond. For guidance on how to interpret the outlook, a wider range of information, and a full description of underpinning methods, please visit the website: www.hydoutuk.net



About the UK Hydrological Outlook:

This document presents an outlook for the UK water situation for the next 1-3 months and beyond, using observational datasets, meteorological forecasts and a suite of hydrological modelling tools. The outlook is produced in a collaboration between the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), British Geological Survey (BGS), the Met Office, the Environment Agency (EA), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and for Northern Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure – Rivers (DfIR).

Data and Models:

The UK Hydrological Outlook depends on the active cooperation of many data suppliers. This cooperation is gratefully acknowledged. Historic river flow and groundwater data are sourced from the [UK National River Flow Archive](#) and the [National Groundwater Level Archive](#). Contemporary data are provided by the EA, SEPA, NRW and DfIR. These data are used to initialise hydrological models, and to provide outlook information based on statistical analysis of historical analogues.

Climate forecasts are produced by the Met Office. Hydrological modelling is undertaken by UKCEH using the Grid-to-Grid and GR6J hydrological models. Hydrogeological modelling uses the AquMod model run by BGS. Supporting documentation is available from the Outlooks website: <https://hydoutuk.net/about/methods>

Presentation:

The language used in the summary presented overleaf generally places flows and groundwater levels into just three classes, i.e. below normal, normal, and above normal. However, the underpinning methods use as many as seven classes as defined in the graphic to the right, i.e. the summary uses a simpler classification than some of the methods. On those occasions when it is appropriate to provide greater discrimination at the extremes the terminology and definitions of the seven class scheme will be adopted.

Percentile range of historic values for relevant month	
Exceptionally high flow	> 95
Notably high flow	87-95
Above normal	72-87
Normal range	28-72
Below normal	13-28
Notably low flow	5-13
Exceptionally low flow	< 5

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Further information:

For more detailed information about the UK Hydrological Outlook, and the derivation of the maps, plots and interpretation provided in this outlook, please visit the UK Hydrological Outlook website. The website features a host of other background information, including a wider range of sources of information which are used in the preparation of this Outlook. Dynamic access to many of the outputs of the UK Hydrological Portal are available on the [UK Hydrological Outlooks Portal](#).

Contact:

UK Hydrological Outlooks, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8BB
t: 01491 838800 e: <https://hydoutuk.net/contact>

Reference for the UK Hydrological Outlook:

UK Hydrological Outlook, 12 January 2026, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Oxfordshire UK, Online, <https://www.hydoutuk.net/latest-outlook/>

Other Sources of Information:

The UK Hydrological Outlook should be used alongside other sources of up-to-date information on the current water resources status and flood risk.

Environment Agency Water Situation Reports: provides summary of water resources status on a monthly and weekly basis for England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/water-situation-reports-for-england>

Flood warnings are continually updated, and should be consulted for an up-to-date and localised assessment of flood risk:

- Environment Agency: <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/map>
- Natural Resources Wales: <https://flood-warning.naturalresources.wales/>
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding.aspx>

Hydrological Summary for the UK: provides summary of current water resources status for the UK: <https://nrfa.ceh.ac.uk/monthly-hydrological-summary-uk>

UK Met Office forecasts for the UK: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>

UK Water Resources Portal: monitor the UK hydrological situation in near real-time including rainfall, river flow, groundwater and soil moisture from COSMOS-UK: <https://eip.ceh.ac.uk/hydrology/water-resources/>