draft Drought Plan 2027

Appendix 8: Drought Communications Plan

May 2026

Appendix 8 - Drought Communications Plan

1. Introduction

Experience from past droughts highlights the need for effective management and communication. This appendix outlines our communications plan and how it evolves from normal or business as usual (BAU) conditions all the way through to drought conditions to ensure timely and targeted messaging that influences customer behaviour as well as informs regulators and other stakeholders.

The period leading up to a drought, is an essential time for communications preparation and sharing early context and information. We will proactively and positively engage with our customers, explaining the situation and what they can to help.

Our communications plan will be flexible enough to plan for imposing Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) or Non-Essential Use Bans (NEUBs), should they be required. The implementation of any of these restrictions would be supplemented by messaging explaining exactly what they mean for household (HH) and non-household (NHH) customers.

Our approach builds on lessons learned from dry periods (experienced in 2022 and 2025) and the often-coinciding periods of high demand. We also liaise with water companies internationally and review their approaches to help incorporate best practice into our own plans. For example, the Denver Water (US) 'Use Only What You Need' campaign, which ran for over 10 years, provided a strong model for communicating water use by making consumption visible and easy for customers to understand.

Our communications plan incorporates guidance from UKWIR, CCW, MOSL, the Environment Agency and Ofwat.

2. Water resources monitoring and drought levels for communication

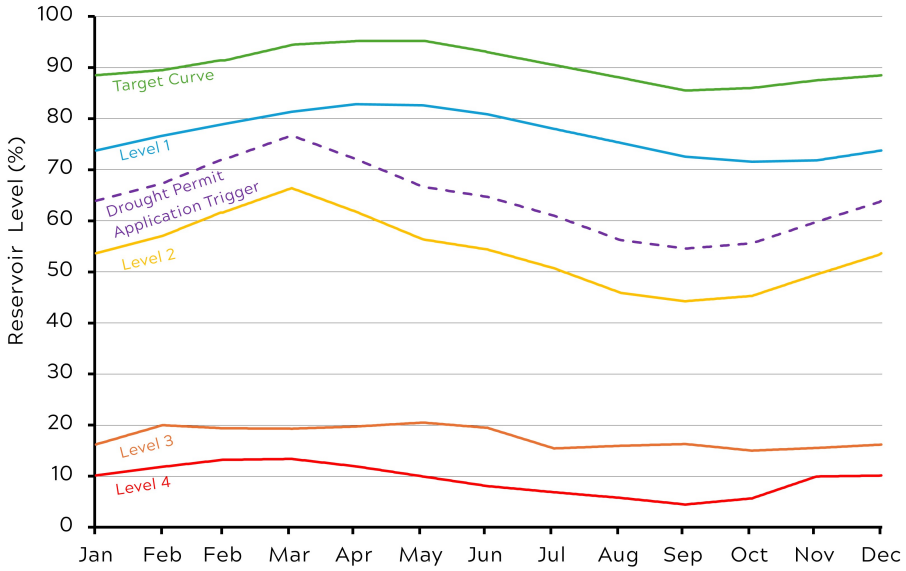
Our communications approach uses the drought levels as a guide to communications we may need at different points during dry weather or a drought. These levels are applied to a range of our reservoir, river and groundwater sources to help us track the situation and indicate when resources are being depleted due to a lack of rainfall. An example of how the drought levels look for a reservoir is presented in **Figure 2.1**. Having an idea of how drought is developing across the region allows us to apply the most appropriate form of communication, in the areas most at risk.

The Water Resources and Drought team is responsible for tracking water resources and will provide full and timely updates to the Drought Communications Lead and Drought Management Team (DMT), to enable decisions on the best method of communications. To facilitate the decision-making process, we have developed a communication framework for each drought level, these are shared in the sections below. These frameworks are a guide only and the DMT will consider the specifics of the drought situation before commencing any communications activity. Our drought levels and communication frameworks have both been developed to allow enough time within each drought level to implement and see the benefits of the range of activities before moving to the next stage.

The level and tonality of messaging can move up and down within the existing framework, i.e. messages would soften and transition to BAU during drought recovery and escalate as the situation worsens, using the same indicators.

In summary, our communications plan aligns to our drought levels and the associated actions set out in **Section 2.3 and Part 3 of the Main Plan.**

Figure 2.1 Example of reservoir target and drought levels



3. Communications during BAU conditions

Anglian Water is the fastest-growing and largest water company in England and Wales, by geographic area, serving c.5 million customers.

The East of England, the region we predominantly serve, is the driest in the country, receiving less rainfall than other regions which makes us prone to events such as drought. Other pressures, such as 28% of the land being low-lying, as well as the population rapidly growing (home to three of the fastest-growing cities in the UK, Cambridge, Peterborough and Milton Keynes) are factors that also need to be taken into account.

We have a long-standing approach through our 'Love Every Drop' company brand and purpose to encourage water efficiency with our customers. Considering the challenges in our region, we have a vested interest in taking a proactive approach throughout the whole year to mitigate the impacts of drought.

Our communications activities are part of our wider demand management strategy which is set out in WRMP24. Water efficiency is one of our long-standing campaigns, with activity being shared prior to, during and after a drought. Where appropriate in our communications, we will reference our longer-term plans and investment for managing drought and water resilience across the region (e.g. finding and fixing leaks, our strategic interconnecting pipeline and plans to progress two new reservoirs).

We regularly communicate with a broad range of stakeholders, our people, our customers and other interested parties, demonstrating the role we can all play in preserving water. With our strategic storytelling around the importance of water and why we need to be mindful of use, we already have a receptive audience - a helpful baseline for drought communications. Whatever the weather, we already have ongoing BAU agile, tactical communications to build on during periods of dry and wet weather with channels for targeting at the ready.

3.1 Embedding sustainable water saving behaviours

Alongside consistently encouraging water efficient behaviours in our communications, smart meters are helping to bridge the gap between customer perception of water use and actual consumption.

To ensure we maintain the most effective messaging and engagement via a multi-channel framework, we regularly assess customer perceptions and insight to shape our communications approach. As part of previous customer surveys, we have found that most customers think it is important or quite important to reduce the amount of water used in day-to-day life. The most common reasons are environmental concerns, to save money and water scarcity. Most customers feel they are already doing their part by reducing their water use.

However, to drive down sustainable reductions we are committed to closing the 'action gap' and focus on making positive behaviour changes through the following actions.

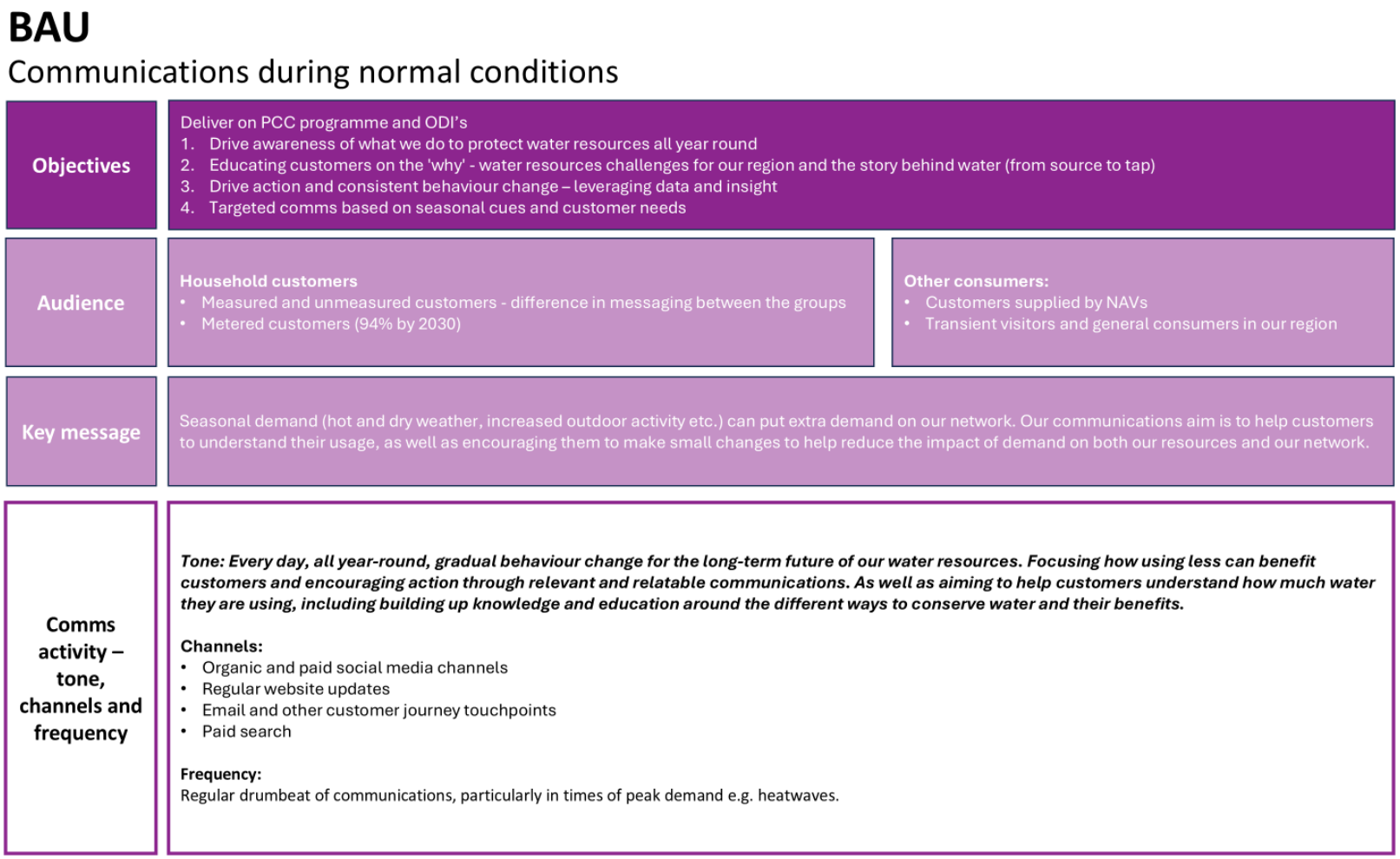
- **Educate:** Communicating the challenging water resources situation in our region as a result of climate change and growth, alongside highlighting how we are working to futureproof water supplies and minimise waste.
- **Build intent:** Develop customer understanding of the importance of individual action to reduce water consumption, growing motivation to change behaviours at home. Create a culture that values water as a precious resource to be preserved.
- **Behaviour change**: Identify opportunities to create actual change that can support customers to use less water. Utilising both trusted and innovative devices to accelerate savings and complement customer action.

The work of Anglian Water extends well beyond water services. Through targeted funds, educational programmes, environmental projects, and local partnerships, we strive to nurture both people and ecosystems, particularly in vulnerable or water-stressed communities.

We continue to educate our customers about the water resources pressure we face in our region; however, we know education and raising awareness isn't enough. We have evolved our behaviour change strategy to drive action and create sustainable behaviour change for long-term benefits. We continue to develop our capabilities to understand water usage in the home so we can make sophisticated decisions and monitor demand reductions. This is part of our ongoing aspirations for increasing resilience across our region, ensuring we're protecting the water resource we have available for the environment, communities and businesses.

Figure 3.1 sets out the communications framework for BAU conditions.

Figure 3.1 BAU communications framework



4. Communications during Level 1 conditions

The primary goal of the Level 1 communications framework (Figure 4.1) is to ensure customers and stakeholders are fully informed and prepared to respond effectively to prolonged dry weather conditions. The key objectives include:

- **Raise awareness:** Clearly communicate that we are in prolonged dry weather conditions and its potential impact on water resources, environment and agriculture.
- **Promote action:** Encourage proactive water conservation and adherence to any guidelines issued.
- **Maintain trust:** Deliver transparent, timely, and consistent updates to reassure customers and stakeholders that the situation is being managed responsibly.

Figure 4.2 demonstrates the examples of communications we use during BAU and how we would look to build and amplify these into Level 1 communications.

As prolonged dry weather develops, our plan will be flexible so that we can escalate our actions within a drought level and prepare customers for the next step e.g. moving from Level 1 into Level 2 which may bring the requirement for restriction such as TUBs to be implemented.

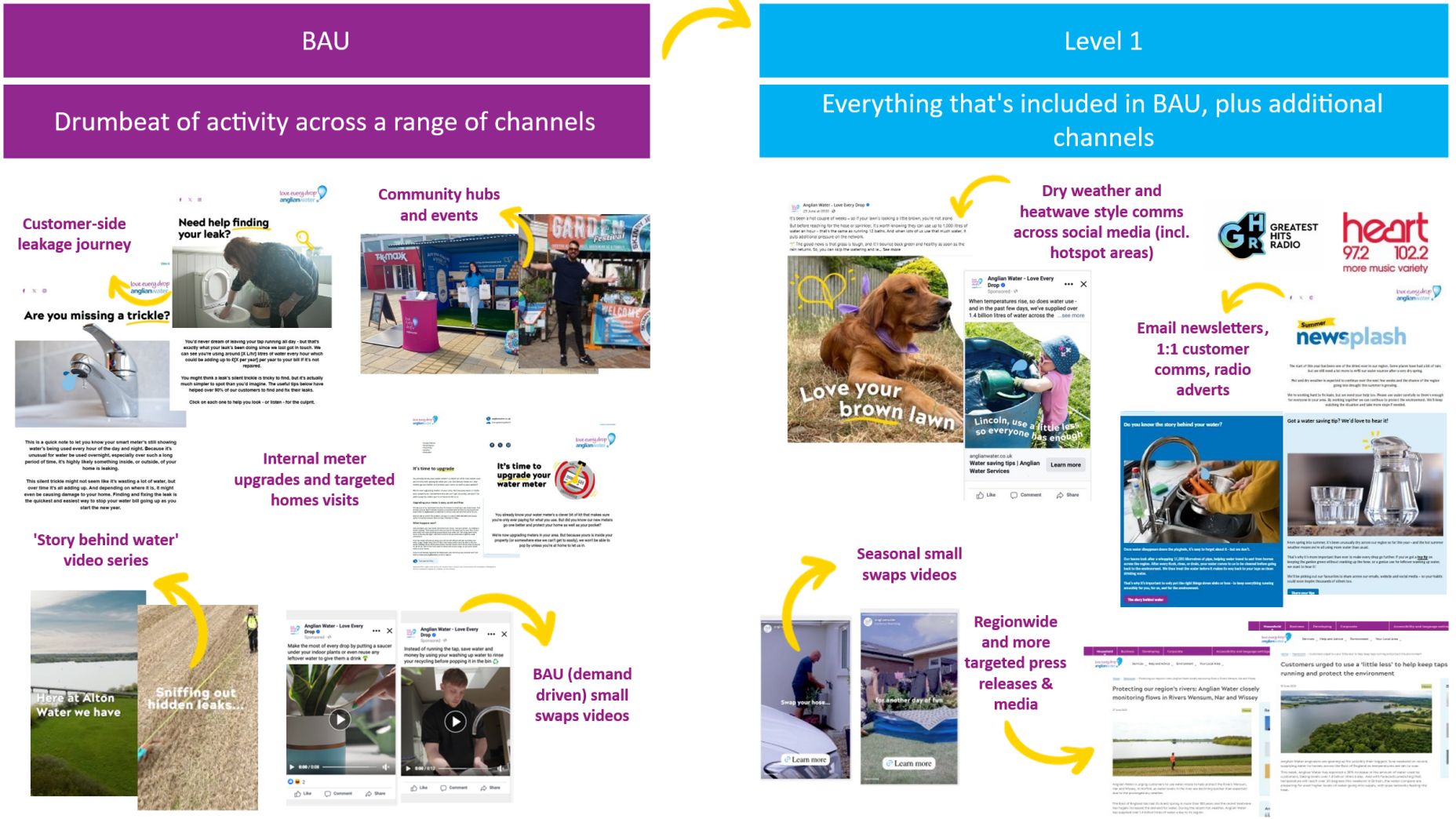
Figure 4.1 Level 1 communications framework

Level 1

Communications during prolonged dry weather

Objectives	Manage customer expectation to avoid surprises 1. Raise awareness of our water resources position as a result of prolonged dry weather and what we are doing to mitigate risks to supply 2. Education of what that means for customers in terms of impact 3. Drive consumer action to prevent escalation and inform customers about how they can take control of their usage (through water saving initiatives) 4. Manage customer expectation on the process of water resources management, i.e. what we're already doing, potential escalation to further actions such as TUBs if needed	
Audience	**Household customers:** • Measured and unmeasured customers - difference in messaging between the groups • Metered customers (94% by 2030)	**Other consumers:** • Customers supplied by NAVs • Transient visitors and general consumers in our region
Key message	Due to prolonged dry weather, **water resource levels are declining and are lower than usual**. This means our water resources and the environment are under pressure, and we're actively monitoring and managing the situation to ensure continued supply. We also want to encourage customers to help where they can, by using less water.	
Comms activity – tone, channels, and frequency	***Tone: Increased urgency to adapt to the developing dry weather and drought. This is where we will introduce more scene setting around the position our region is in when it comes to water resources, and the impact of hot and dry weather on our supply systems. Using a wide variety of channels to tailor messages to and reach different audiences.*** **Channels:** • Organic and paid social media channels • Regular website updates • Email and other customer journey touchpoints • Paid search • **Press releases and consistent stakeholder engagement** • **Radio (hotspot locations)** • **Printed collateral and stakeholder toolkits** **Frequency:** Increased frequency and regularity of communications, building on the existing BAU framework. As well as introducing additional comms on a targeted basis, for hotspot areas who may be seeing the effects of the dry weather more than others.	

Figure 4.2 An example of how the different types of communication channels can be used to build between BAU and Level 1



5. Communications during Level 2 conditions

The primary goal of the Level 2 communications framework (**Figure 5.1**) is to ensure customers and stakeholders understand the severity of the developing drought so that they support us with water saving behaviours; as well as complying with TUBs if they are required.

Building on Level 1 communication, this would now escalate to meet the Level 2 objectives:

- **Ensure awareness**: Communicate the potential urgency of the drought situation using water resource visibility. Ongoing engagement and targeting high users through smart meter data, and where we have ongoing customer side leaks via personalised 1-1 communication.
- **Manage expectations**: Explain what TUBs mean for customers and businesses, and when they are being implemented; with clear guidance on what actions are included and excluded.
- **Clarify scope**: Identify who and what activities are impacted by any restrictions.
- **Support customers**: Provide guidance on water-saving actions, especially for vulnerable customers.

As summarised in **Figure 5.1**, the key message during Level 2 is to keep consistency on the following:

- Explain why restrictions are necessary in relatable terms.
- Highlight the impact of dry weather on water supply and the environment.
- Show what actions customers can take (e.g., saving water and complying with TUBs).
- Demonstrating what we as a water company are doing, by preventing further supply side issues e.g. “We’re working around the clock to protect water supplies.”

The implementation of any restrictions would be preceded by messaging that explains exactly what they mean for customers and businesses. More information on TUBs can be found in **Appendix 5**.

Figure 5.2 demonstrates the examples of communications we use during Level 1 and then how we would look to build and amplify these into Level 2 communications.

Figure 5.1 Level 2 communications framework

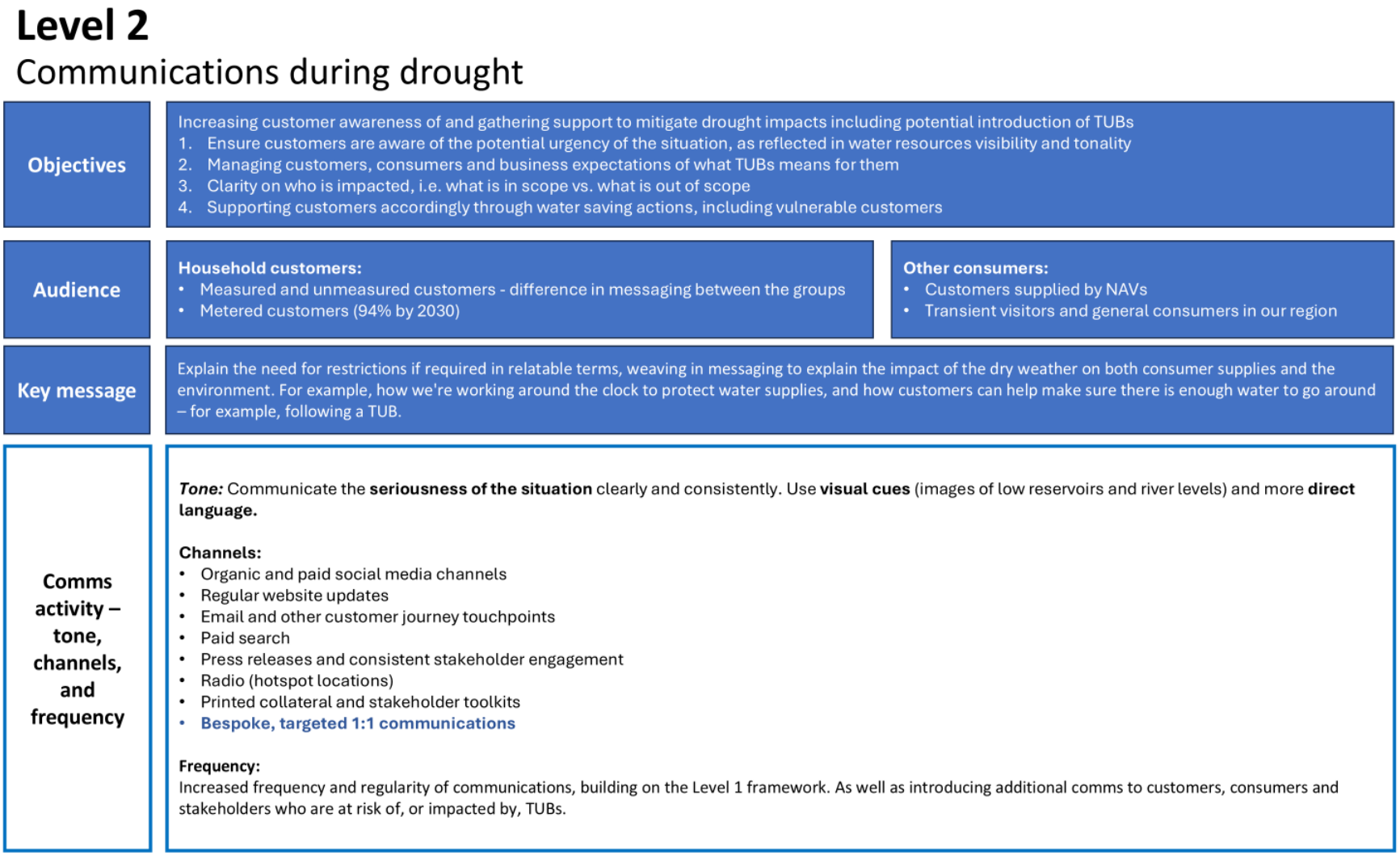
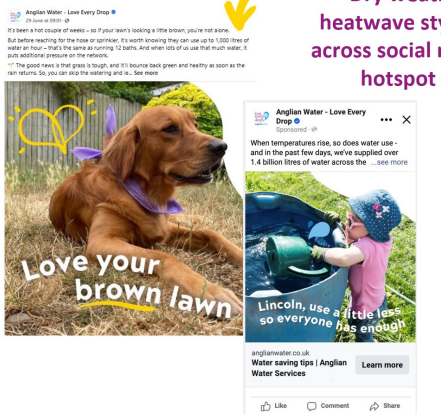


Figure 5.2 An example of how the different types of communication channels can be used to move between Level 1 and Level 2

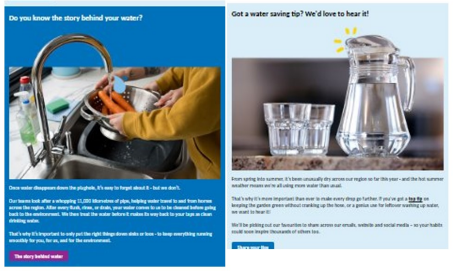
Level 1

Everything that's included in BAU, plus additional channels

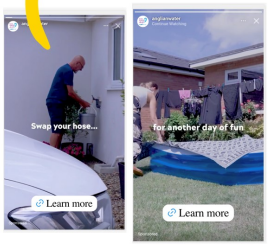
Dry weather and heatwave style comms across social media (incl. hotspot areas)



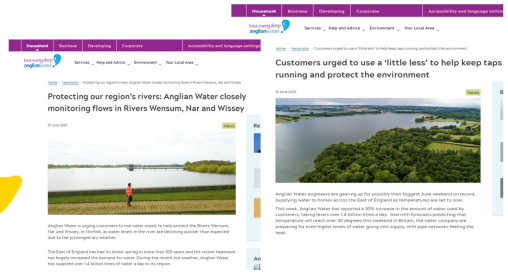
Email newsletters, 1:1 customer comms, radio adverts



Seasonal small swaps videos



Regionwide and more targeted press releases & media



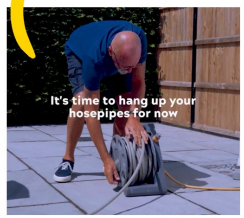
Level 2

Building on the foundations of Level 1 communications, adding more bespoke 1:1 communications and TUBs content

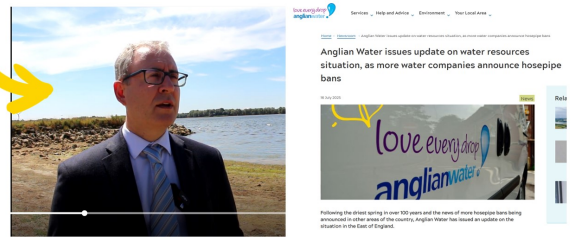
Drought and heatwave style comms across social media (incl. hotspot areas)

Radio adverts (escalated messaging), bespoke 1:1 customer comms and updates

TUBs information videos



More frequent press releases, industry-expert statements, PR and media



6. Communications during Level 3 conditions

The primary goal of the Level 3 communications framework (Figure 6.1) is to ensure customers and stakeholders understand the severity of the drought conditions. This is so they support us with water saving behaviours and comply with TUBs and NEUBs, if they are required.

Level 3 communications clearly build on Level 2 with more urgency and frequency to meet the objectives:

- **Ensure awareness**: Customers are aware of the urgent drought situation using water resource visibility. Ongoing engagement and targeting high users through smart meter data, and where we have ongoing customer side leaks via personalised 1-1 communication.
- **Manage expectations**: Explain what NEUBs mean for customers and businesses, and when they are being implemented along with clear guidance on what actions are included and excluded.
- **Clarify scope**: Identify who and what activities are impacted by any restrictions.
- **Support customers**: Provide guidance on water-saving actions, especially for vulnerable customers.

As summarised in Figure 6.1, the key message during Level 3 is to keep consistency on the following:

- Explain why additional restrictions may be necessary in relatable terms.
- Highlight impact of drought on water supply and environment using visual cues e.g. low reservoir and river levels.
- Show what actions customers can take (e.g. saving water and complying with NEUBs).
- Demonstrate what we, as a water company, are doing by preventing further supply side issues e.g. “We are taking the situation very seriously with a full drought response established to reduce demand and protect our water supplies.”

The implementation of any restrictions would be preceded by messaging that explains exactly what they mean for customers and businesses. More information on NEUBs can be found in **Appendix 5**.

Figure 6.2 demonstrates the examples of communications we use during Level 2 and then how we would look to build and amplify these into Level 3 communications.

If the situation continues to deteriorate then our communications approach will evolve into using more severe language e.g. Day Zero. More information on extreme actions (i.e. Level 3b) can be found in **Appendix 7**. Communication will be a key part of any extreme or emergency situation. We will ensure that pro-active communications are shared with customers and stakeholders during Level 3 if it is likely that the Emergency Drought Plan will be triggered. More detail on this will be noted in our Emergency Drought Plan.

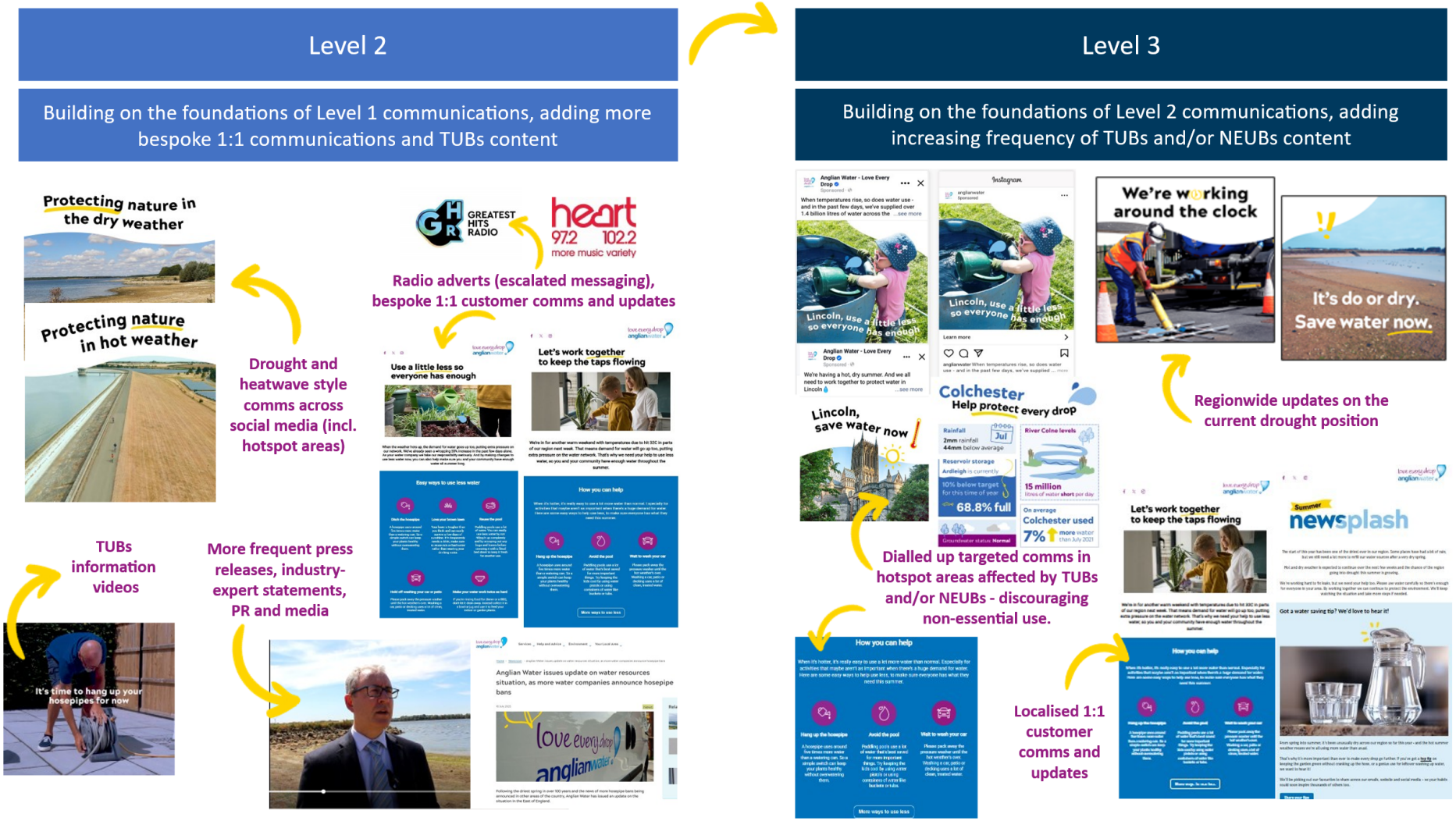
Figure 6.1 Level 3 communications framework

Level 3

Communications during more severe drought

Objectives	Clear messaging about the severity of the drought situation, continuing customer support to mitigate drought impacts including potential introduction of NEUBs 1. Customers are aware of the urgent situation the region and environment are facing, reflected in water resources visibility, comms tonality and frequency 2. Managing expectation of what NEUBs may mean for them 3. Clarity on who is impacted, i.e. what is in scope vs. what is out of scope 4. Supporting customers accordingly through water saving actions, including vulnerable customers	
Audience	**Household customers:** • Measured and unmeasured customers - difference in messaging between the groups • Metered customers (94% by 2030)	**Other consumers:** • Customers supplied by NAVs • Transient visitors and general consumers in our region
Key message	Explain the need for possible additional restrictions in relatable terms, weaving in messaging to explain the impact of the drought on both consumer supplies and the environment. The tone of comms will increase in urgency and use more visual cues of environmental impact – dry ground, low river and reservoir levels. This will lay the foundations for the potential announcement of a NEUB, supporting and empowering consumer behaviour change to reduce pressure on the network, resources and environment.	
Proposed activity	***Tone:*** *Communicate the* ***seriousness of the drought situation*** *clearly, consistently and regularly. Use* ***visual cues*** *(images of low reservoirs and river levels) and more* ***direct language.*** *Explain the impact of the drought on both supply and the environment, to encourage meaningful action.* **Channels:** • Organic and paid social media channels • Regular website updates • Email and other customer journey touchpoints • Paid search • Press releases and consistent stakeholder engagement • Radio (hotspot locations) • Printed collateral and stakeholder toolkits • Bespoke, targeted 1:1 communications • **Increased levels of paid activity in areas affected by TUBs and NEUBs** **Frequency:** • Increased frequency and regularity of communications, building on the Level 2 framework. As well as introducing additional comms to customers, consumers and stakeholders who are at risk of, or impacted by, TUBs and NEUBs.	

Figure 6.2 An example of how the different types of communication channels can be used to move between Level 2 and Level 3



7. Communications with NAVs, Retailers and NHH Customers

7.1 NAVs

New Appointments and Variations (NAVs) are an expanding feature linked to property development growth. NAVs typically cover new developments that manage utilities for the customers within them. As a result, these customers are not Anglian Water customers, and we do not have a direct relationship with them.

We have a good relationship with the NAVs that operate within our region and already work together closely throughout the year, not just during drought. This puts on a good footing when it comes aligning and enhancing actions and communications during dry weather and drought conditions.

NAV developments are mainly HH properties in nature, with very little NHH business demand. Therefore, we will utilise **Figure 3.1**, **Figure 4.1**, **Figure 5.1** and **Figure 6.1** which set out our HH communications approach and possible activities to support NAVs with communicating with their customers that are within our region. The frameworks are used as a guideline, but we will adopt a communications approach which is appropriate and relevant for the individual NAV rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

Other liaison with NAVs to support maintained communication includes:

- Providing regular updates on the water resources situation and the forecast risk for drought level status changes, along with the associated implementation of drought actions being required by: providing one-to-one account management, updating our dedicated SharePoint site, sharing updates on the Independent Networks Association (INA) drought group meetings.
- Customer communications regarding water efficiency measures, such as; creating joint branded communications and campaigns to ensure consistent messaging or sharing downloadable content and ‘best practices’ with regard to water efficiency measures.
- The potential for accelerating leakage reduction within the NAV developments.
- The implementation of TUBs or NEUBs.

At each drought level we will consult with the NAVs on how they implement their drought actions and communications, and how we can assist with additional resources (in alignment with the NAVs own Drought Plans).

7.2 Retailers and NHH Customers

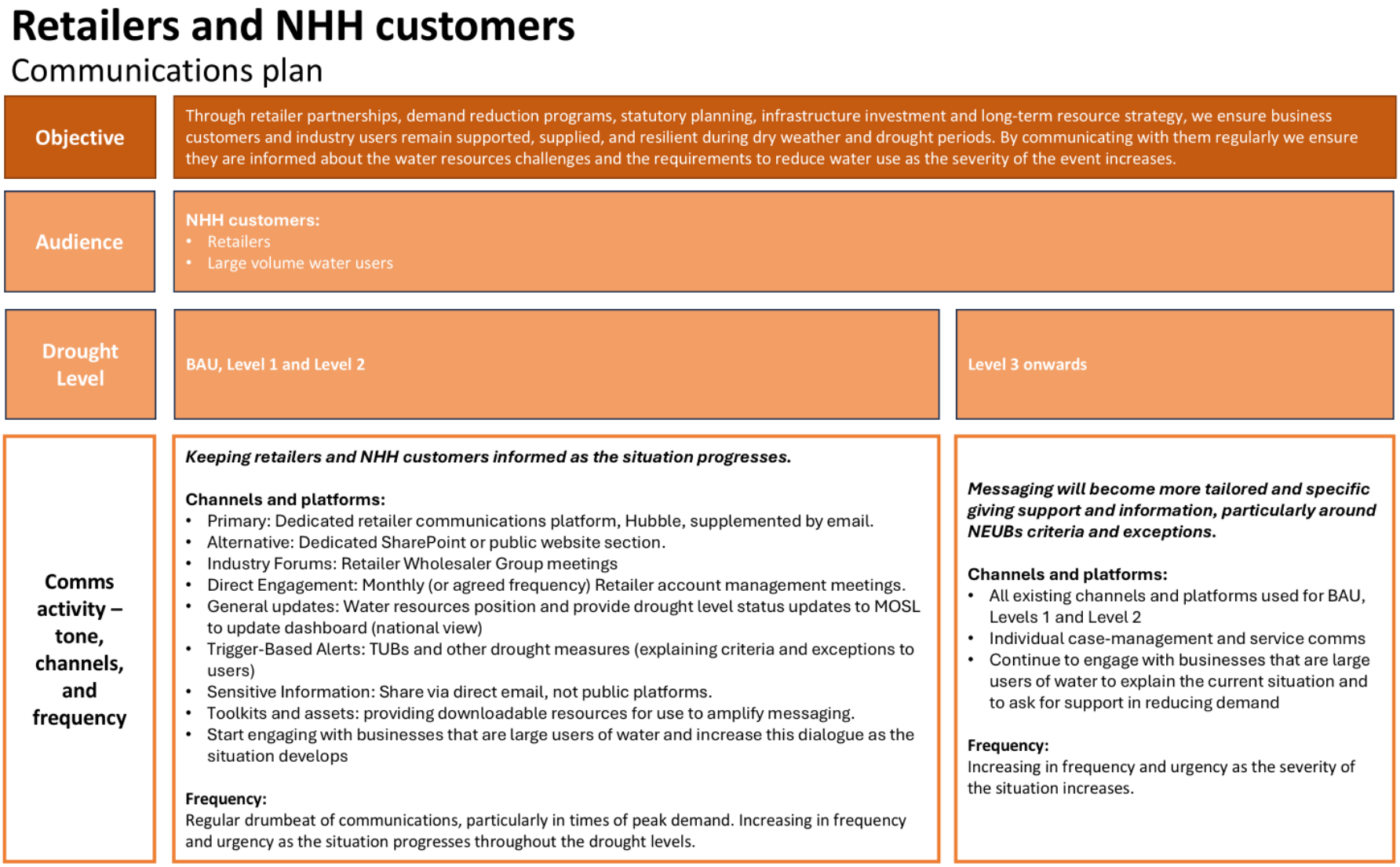
Anglian Water works with a wide range of retailers who offer valuable insight about our NHH customers.

As we approach dry weather and drought conditions, our close relationships which we foster with retailers all year round puts us in a good position to work with them on demand actions and communications to minimise water resource decline. Similarly to NAVs we also share regular situation reporting updates to ensure that retailers are able to proactively develop communication material, plan for implementation of possible actions and start discussions with their customers. It is especially important that communications are aligned as we recognise that NHH customers will likely also pick up messaging from the broader media communications ongoing at the time.

Our communication framework approach (**Figure 7.1**) explains our key objectives and activities with Retailers and NHH customers as we move through the different drought levels. The framework is used as a guideline, but we will adopt a communications approach which is appropriate and relevant for the individual retailer rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

Through retailer partnerships, demand reduction programmes, statutory planning, infrastructure investment, and long-term resource strategy, we ensure business customers and industry users remain supported, supplied, and resilient during drought periods.

Figure 7.1 Retailers and NHH customers communications framework



8. Communications monitoring, tracking and feedback

Our communications messaging to customers will follow the progression of a drought, moving from BAU to drought conditions. The benefit that a year-round 'love every drop' messaging strategy brings, is the ability to have a presence in customer minds about the value of water. It allows us to dial up the tone and urgency in the communications, to ensure we recognise the reality of needing to save water and then water restrictions if they are needed. Using customer insight and knowledge around language, tone and targeting, we can aim to make our communications as effective as possible.

This is broader than just customers too. It includes stakeholders, influencers, visitors (to our water parks), NHH customers, retailers, and NAVs. Everyone should know why saving water is important at this crucial time.

We measure feedback using three key methods - engagement tracking, stakeholder feedback and compliance monitoring. Some of the specific metrics that we track to measure effectiveness across all paid, earned and owned channels are:

- Reach, impressions and engagement stats across regionwide and hyperlocal activity on digital and social media channels i.e. reach, clicks, video views, click through rate (CTR), etc.
- Cost effectiveness measures across paid digital and social media including cost per mille (CPM) and cost per result (CPR).
- Regionwide and industry social listening including mentions, reach and sentiment through Brandwatch.
- Levels of release coverage picked up by Signal (our media monitoring platform).
- Website traffic to critical pages, Search Engine Optimisation performance on key search terms.
- Email open rate, click rate, unsubscribes, reach and engagement.
- Number of media enquiries / interviews given to the press office following stories.
- Feedback from colleagues on internal communication channels.

We also receive feedback from customers in person across the region, through field and operational engagement, community sessions and educational and school visits.

As set out in **Appendix 4**, we try to relate the impact of any activity such as communications back to a demand-based saving using data such as what is gathered from smart meters. However, with so many different activities that are usually going on in one area at the same time it is difficult to disaggregate the specific savings.

9. Communications with key groups and stakeholders

Anglian Water plays a pivotal role in engaging with a wide range of stakeholders when it comes to dry weather and drought management.

We will communicate to all audiences across the spectrum in an honest and transparent way, explaining why it is important and in the context of each role the audience has. This should never appear to be a ‘tell and do’ strategy.

The list of audience groups and communication methods identified in **Table 9.1** provides an indication of potential groups and approaches and will evolve and develop dependent on the condition of the developing drought situation.

Further information on some of the stakeholder groups is included in the sections below.

Table 9.1 Examples of communication methods with key stakeholder groups and an indication of the frequency of engagement with each group

Stakeholder group	Liaison	Communication methods	Drought levels			
			BAU	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Our people	Briefings to employees including customer facing staff	Internal intranet (‘lighthouse’) Business bulletins and team talks	Ad hoc	Regular	Enhanced	Enhanced
HH customers (inc. vulnerable customers)	Deliver continuous indirect and direct communication of the importance of 'water wise’ behaviour and education	Our website and social media channels Emails Local events Radio and press advertisements	Regular	Regular	Enhanced	Enhanced
NAVs, Retailers and NHH customers	Maintain liaison regarding situation via Wholesale Service Centre Encourage water conservation through water efficiency assessments Leakage audits and process optimisation	Dedicated SharePoint site Emails and phone calls Meetings Industry groups working collaboratively on dual branded communications Social media and tailored toolkits	Regular	Regular	Enhanced	Enhanced
Media	'Water wise' messages Offers of briefings and interviews Situation updates and advice as required	Proactive and reactive press statements Organising media interviews Provision of media packages	Ad hoc	Regular	Enhanced	Enhanced
Regulators	Close ongoing liaison at all levels Sharing of data Discussion on dry weather and drought issues Collaborative working to ensure effective and timely actions	Phone calls Emails Meetings	Regular	Regular	Enhanced	Enhanced
Water UK	Industry liaison and interface with key stakeholders	Phone calls Emails Meetings	Ad hoc	Regular	Enhanced	Enhanced
Regional groups, neighbouring water companies and other abstractors	Sharing of water resources situation Alignment of communications and actions Offering support to other sectors	Phone calls Emails Meetings	Ad hoc	Regular	Enhanced	Enhanced
Government, MPs and local authorities	Regular and open dialogue on the drought situation Request to amplify 'Water wise' messages via their channels. Liaison to enable the message to be communicated to a wider audience.	Emails and letters Phone calls and meetings Site visits Newsletters	Ad hoc	Ad hoc	Regular	Enhanced
Local resilience forums, key industrial users and other emergency responders	Regular and open dialogue on the drought situation. Liaison on drought actions that might impact local communities, services and emergency response (e.g. fire service)	Emails Meetings Newsletters	Ad hoc	Ad hoc	Regular	Enhanced
Local eNGOs and other interested stakeholder groups	Sharing of water resources and drought action info in areas of interest	Emails Meetings Newsletters	Ad hoc	Ad hoc	Regular	Enhanced

9.1 Government and regulator groups

There is a wide range of government, regulator and authority groups that we aim to keep up to date throughout a dry weather or drought event. Some of the key parties include:

- Defra
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Historic England
- Canal and River Trust
- Drinking Water Inspectorate
- Public Health England
- Ofwat
- Consumer Council for Water

One of the best ways to collaborate with these stakeholders is through the National Drought Group (NDG). The purpose and remit of the NDG is to create a single coherent, cross sector team, which can manage coordinated delivery of drought management activities, communications and risk mitigation. The NDG continues to evolve with three key subgroups (Water Supply, Environment, Agriculture & Land Use and Communications) feeding into the main group. All are attended by a wide variety of stakeholders (some of which are listed above).

This need for collaborative and joined-up drought thinking has continued to grow. We remain part of the NDG, attending regular meetings as required and providing input into the Drought Health Check and Prospects reports. We continue to work closely with the Environment Agency with regular meetings and updates provided throughout each stage of drought.

9.2 Regional water resources groups

We are an active participant in three regional groups:

- Water Resources East (WRE)
- Water Resources North (WReN)
- Water Resources South East (WRSE)

Since 2022 all the groups now have dedicated drought groups which meet at different intervals throughout the year depending on the drought situation. These drought groups are one of the best ways to engage with key local stakeholders in a particular region, so we are always keen to share updates and work on aligning actions and communications. More information on the regional group's roles in dry weather and drought can be found in **Appendix 2**.

9.3 Local resilience forums, key industrial users and other emergency responders

As the severity of drought increases, one of the most important stakeholder groups to keep updated is the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) which can contain local category 1 (blue light services) and 2 responders as well as key industrial users such as power plant operators.

During BAU conditions, Anglian Water will attend the LRFs regular meetings periodically, to share key updates and activities that might be occurring in the area. However, when there are water supply related incidents, the LRFs are an integral group that our Emergency Planning team liaise with to manage the situation. We would ensure the same level of engagement occurred as a drought event intensified, providing updates to this group on relevant actions such as restrictions (e.g. TUBs and NEUBs) as well as more extreme versions of drought actions such as pressure optimisation.

Please note the emergency planning and actions e.g. rota cuts are not covered within the Drought Plan and is instead covered in the Emergency Drought Plan. We will work with key stakeholders through the development of this Emergency Plan.

9.4 Vulnerable customers

We have specific duties to identify and support customers in vulnerable circumstances, especially during higher risk situations, such as drought risk. We have developed our approach in alignment with Ofwat's service for all vulnerability guidance.

We strongly maintain and actively expand our Priority Services Register (PSR), which records customers who require extra support accessing water services. This is essential when customers need further support during drought activities e.g. restrictions.

Like any incident, during a drought we ensure the following is maintained:

- Identify customers needing extra help (e.g., health conditions, disabilities, financial hardship).
- Record customer needs and ensure systems are in place to meet them.

All the above communication channels are adapted to known support needs, especially during periods of heightened risk such as drought. This includes:

- Ensuring communication methods match customers' accessibility needs (large print, translation, phone first contact, etc.)
- Offering proactive check ins by phone or email for those who may be at increased risk.
- Ensuring support offerings are easy to understand and clearly presented.

Supporting vulnerable customers during drought requires a combination of proactive identification, tailored communications, priority water supply protection, and special support for accessibility and affordability. We aim to be inclusive by design, maintain high service standards, and ensure nobody is left behind during drought or extreme drought conditions.

9.5 Schools and community engagement

Our education team work with schools all year round to share a variety of water efficiency and environmental messages, reaching thousands of children every year. We have a bespoke schools engagement programme, using new and original resources available to support our water resources narrative. This was promoted to key stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 via the Anglian Water team, and by teachers through a range of materials available for download.

We approach schools through our regular engagement with them to offer this bespoke lesson plan should it be required. We have seen good success with adapting to virtual learning so a combination of all approaches would be used.

To maintain the drumbeat of water efficiency messaging, and to increase awareness, we use hyperlocal partnerships, such as The Skinny Jean Gardener and The Wild Tribe. These are aimed at families, to help them understand more about water, the water cycle and how they interact with it - with a view to educate customers on the need to save water at home and in the garden. The projects designed and delivered educational activity boxes along with downloadable activities, all aimed at pre-school children - so that families went on the journey of discovery together. We have a community and stakeholder team that drive visibility in demand hotspots to drive further engagement in the community (Figure 9.1). Leveraging respected, trusted, or relatable figures within a community is one of the most effective ways to increase message reach, credibility, and impact.

Figure 9.1 Customer Hub Stand in Peterborough

9.6 Internal communications

Ensuring our 6,000 employees are well equipped to speak with customers, partners and suppliers is essential during dry weather and drought. Through our internal engagement platform, *Lighthouse*, we can reach all colleagues with key messages to share within their communities.

Briefings enable employees to act as brand and water-saving advocates, answering local queries and reinforcing campaign messages. These updates include the latest water-resource data, drought actions and information shared through our established internal communication channels.

During the prolonged dry weather of 2022 and 2025, we provided regular updates to explain our position, respond to media coverage and share water-wise tips. Aligning this with our external messaging gave colleagues confidence to discuss the situation with friends and family.

Our people also play an important role in any targeted outreach programme should the need arise.

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