

16th June 2023

Dear

ATISN 17513 FOI request: Hosepipe Ban

Thank you for your request which was received on 18th May 2023. You asked the following questions:

1. Has the Welsh Government considered or discussed the possibility of implementing a hosepipe ban in the near future?
2. If a hosepipe ban is being considered, what are the reasons for its potential implementation?
3. What factors and criteria will be used to determine whether a hosepipe ban is necessary in Wales?
4. Are there any specific regions or areas within Wales that are more likely to be affected by a potential hosepipe ban?
5. What measures, if any, has the Welsh Government taken to mitigate water scarcity or encourage water conservation in Wales?
6. What steps will be taken to inform the public about the implementation of a hosepipe ban, if it is deemed necessary?

Our response

All of the information requested is publicly available online as follows:

- 1. Has the Welsh Government considered or discussed the possibility of implementing a hosepipe ban in the near future?**
 - Yes. The Welsh Government's Drought Liaison Group (WG DLG) was stood-up in March of this year. The Minister for Climate Change issued a Written Statement to the Senedd on 18 May 2023 which contains details on the purpose and membership of the group: [Written Statement: Protecting our water environment in a changing climate \(17 May 2023\) | GOV.WALES.](#)
- 2. If a hosepipe ban is being considered, what are the reasons for its potential implementation?**
 - Both water companies in Wales - Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy - produce Drought Plans, which are required under Section 39B of the [Water Industry Act 1991](#) (WIA). These Plans are available online:
 - [Water resources | Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water \(dwrcymru.com\)](#)
 - [Drought plan | Water Resource Planning | Plan and strategy | About Us | HD Cymru](#)
 - Within these Drought Plans, drought indicators have been developed to identify when a water resource situation is moving into a drought. Drought trigger levels have been defined, aligned with drought

guidance, to ensure that drought actions are proportionate to the level of drought risk. These are:

- Stage 1 - Normal operation
- Stage 2 - Developing drought
- Stage 3 - Drought
- Stage 4 - Severe drought
- Stage 5 – Emergency Measures

3. What factors and criteria will be used to determine whether a hosepipe ban is necessary in Wales?

- The criteria for implementing a hosepipe ban (or Temporary Use Ban - TUB) are set out in Drought Plans. Water companies assess the following indicators across their respective operating areas:
 - Rainfall
 - River flow
 - Reservoir storage
 - Groundwater levels
 - Level of demand
- The decision to effect a ban falls to the relevant water companies under the powers provided by [Section 36 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#) and Section 76(2) of the WIA.
- Technical guidance on drought planning and management is also provided by [Natural Resources Wales](#).

4. Are there any specific regions or areas within Wales that are more likely to be affected by a potential hosepipe ban?

No. Each water company follows their own Drought Plan which fall under water resource zones and the company operational area, rather than regions. Natural Resources Wales operates under drought catchments and has its own drought plan: [Natural Resources Wales / Drought planning and management](#). Whether drought triggers are met will depend entirely on the indicators outlined under question 3.

5. What measures, if any, has the Welsh Government taken to mitigate water scarcity or encourage water conservation in Wales?

- We issue guiding principles for Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs), which water companies are required to produce every 5 years setting out how they will maintain the balance between supply and demand for water over a minimum of a 25-year period. This includes how they will continue to provide water during periods of exceptionally low rainfall. These are available online at:
 - [Water resources | Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water \(dwrcymru.com\)](#) – these pages include details on their approach to the Autumn consultation and its emerging proposals.

- [Water resource management plan | Water Resource Planning | Plan and strategy | About Us | HD Cymru](#)
- Our [Strategic Priorities and Objectives Statement](#) to Ofwat, which we issued last summer, includes the strategic priority for water companies to sustain asset health and build resilience.
- [Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales](#) Report – page 10 “Protecting public water supplies from drought and low flows”
- [Water Strategy for Wales](#) – Welsh Government’s policy for managing, protecting and improving Wales water services and quality
- [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) - Part 1 sets out the ‘[sustainable management of natural resources](#)’ – an approach to managing Wales’ natural resources and ecosystems

6. What steps will be taken to inform the public about the implementation of a hosepipe ban, if it is deemed necessary?

Any decision taken by a water company to implement a hosepipe ban would be notified to the general public according to the communications strategy set-out within the company’s Drought Plan, and via the Drought Liaison Group.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government’s handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government’s Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely