

[Press release: Summer water testing has started at English beaches](#)



The Environment Agency has resumed seasonal water quality testing at more than 400 popular swimming spots.

Last year, water quality remained high with 97.9% of bathing waters in England meeting the tough standards. 92.4% of these locations achieved the top rating of Excellent or Good, meaning visitors to the seaside have 388 top-rated coastal and inland bathing waters to choose from.

The Environment Agency tests water quality at every official bathing water to ensure it is maintained and improved. Beach-goers can check the water quality at their nearest bathing water spot by visiting the Environment Agency's [Bathing Water Data Explorer](#) website.

As well as making sure people can make informed choices about where to bathe, this regular monitoring supports ongoing work to maintain and improve water quality supporting the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

The Environment Agency continues to work with water companies, councils and local communities to keep our beaches clean, reduce pollution and protect our environment.

Helen Wakeham, Head of Water Quality at the Environment Agency, said:

Water quality has improved at English beaches over the last two decades giving locals and tourists a better experience as well as benefiting the environment.

Improving water quality at our beaches is a fantastic achievement and is a testament to the work of Environment Agency staff, water

companies, local authorities, farmers, volunteers and NGOs. It shows what energy and commitment can achieve for the environment and people.

Water quality test data is published on the Environment Agency's website and notifications of water quality issues for over 350 locations in the UK are available via the Safer Seas Service app, so we urge people to check as part of planning your trip to the beach.

Over the last twenty years water quality has improved. In the early 1990's, just 28 per cent of bathing waters would have met the highest standards and last year 92.4% achieved Excellent or Good.

The Environment Agency will continue to collaborate and drive improvements nationally and look for local solutions to achieve the goal in the government's 25 Year Plan to further reduce the bacteria in our bathing waters by 2030.

Water companies have invested over £2.5 billion on projects that have improved water at swimming beaches. Water companies have signed up to Environment Agency proposals to improve 24 bathing waters between 2020-2025.

All members of the public can help keep water clean by taking all rubbish with them after visits to the beach, not leaving dog mess on the beach and never flushing wet wipes or pouring fats down drains.

Pollution from sewage and pollution from agriculture are generally recognised as the two most significant sources but there are some local variations.

At some beaches pollution from farm run-off has an impact on water quality. Surveys have shown that around a third of bathing water pollution is caused by agriculture. In 2018 [new farming rules for water](#) were brought in.

The weather often has the greatest short-term influence on water quality. Heavy rain washes pollution off urban areas and rural land into rivers and the sea which causes a temporary dip in water quality. The [Bathing Water Data Explorer](#) website may advise against swimming and the water quality app from Surfers Against Sewage includes EA pollution alerts in addition to data from water companies providing the public with up to date information before deciding where to swim.

In addition to information being made available online, signs are displayed at beaches with the bathing water classifications.