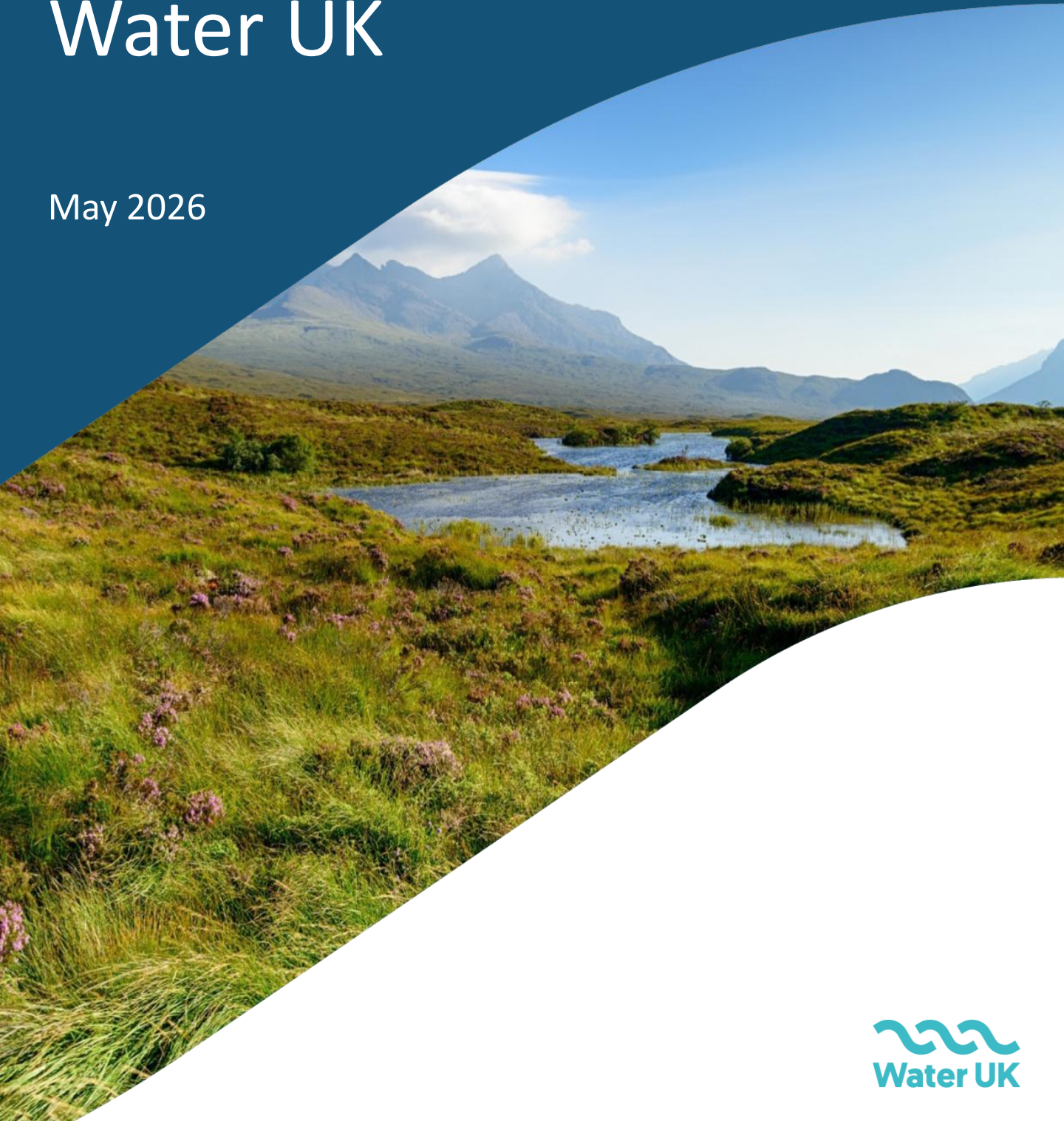


# Head of Resilience and Drought Water UK

May 2026



# Introduction from the Chief Executive

**Water is used by each of us every day, but until the last few years was rarely the subject of political debate. Greater scrutiny on the industry has created an unprecedented opportunity to challenge conventional wisdom and secure acceptance for contentious – but necessary – reforms. Joining Water UK provides the chance to develop ideas that are radical but progressive, and design strategies to have them adopted by decision-makers.**

Since joining as CEO in 2023, and supported by our Chair, the former Cabinet Minister Ruth Kelly, Water UK has increasingly been at the centre of leading work to ensure that the water industry better meets the needs and interests of society. This has included major new transparency platforms, sweeping and detailed work on long-overdue reforms and building the detailed case for investment.

There is much more to do and, in the next few years, I have three main priorities.

First, we need to ensure that industry is well-placed to deliver a quadrupling of capital investment to 2030. This investment is urgently needed to renew infrastructure and restore trust. We work to ensure the rapid and effective delivery of improvements across the country.

Secondly, we must work with the UK and Welsh Governments on their major programmes of reform, which includes implementing their responses to the Independent Water Commission led by Sir Jon Cunliffe. Our aim is to develop major, well-evidenced and compelling policy ideas that better enable the sector to deliver on its long-term ambitions. Those ambitions include much better environmental

performance and the huge effort needed to secure water supplies against climate change and to support economic growth and new homes. To accelerate progress, we must also work with government to improve controls over sewage treatment and wider pollutants across society, which also enter water used for drinking water.

It is hard to overstate the potential of this sector reform programme in England and Wales. Since privatisation in 1990, there has been no major change to water regulation. With public and political expectations running very high, Water UK is uniquely well placed to shape the future of water for decades to come.

The third is to bolster our organisation's capabilities. This is because the industry looks to Water UK to analyse some of the most profound public policy challenges facing the country. We need to develop and deliver policies in partnership with some of the largest companies in the country, as well as the most senior decision makers across government, regulators and non-governmental organisations.

Therefore, recognising the challenges and opportunities facing the industry, and our members' commitment to Water UK, we are expanding the organisation.

If the kind of questions we're grappling with sound interesting, and you are excited about making a real difference on a subject that touches the lives of everyone in the country, I would love you to apply.

**David Henderson**  
CEO  
Water UK



# Head of Resilience and Drought

## Role description

The water industry is at a historic turning point. The Head of Resilience and Drought role will play a vital role in supporting the industry to continually improve the resilience of an essential service that is critical to life.

Water UK's Policy Team is led by our Director of Policy and comprises two Deputy Directors, one for wastewater and one for water and Price Review 24 delivery. Beneath them sit six 'Heads of' roles - experts who are each in charge of a discreet portfolio including the Head of Natural Environment and the Head of Planning and Growth. The Head of Resilience and Drought plays a critical role in the team, running Water UK's day-to-day crisis readiness and response function which, in collaboration with our members, allows us to share information, help pool alternative resources and share strategies for avoiding, responding to and recovering from emergency events.

Due to the varied nature of threats, this function covers a large number of risks, from cyber-attacks to chemicals shortages, drought and power outages. Due to the critical nature of the work, significant liaison is necessary with Government (usually via Defra) and regulators, including Ofwat, the Drinking Water Inspectorate and the Environment Agency. The role will be responsible for developing industry policy positions on managing risk – for example by reviewing and arguing for any required changes in the government and regulators' approach to drought management.

# Head of Resilience and Drought Responsibilities

The role will lead on the following key areas:

## 1) Policy development – resilience readiness:

Lead Water UK policy development and engagement for resilience matters and ensure delivery of the policies committed to in the government’s white paper, A New Vision for Water. This includes work on the following:

- Policy recommendations on improving the industry, government and regulators’ readiness for and management of drought.
- Improvements to Security and Emergency Measures Direction (SEMD), which ensures companies safeguard supplies against civil emergencies and other challenges.
- Updates to Network and Information Systems (NIS) requirements, which are set to enhance cyber security in essential services such as water.
- Review of supply chain arrangements for critical chemicals used in the treatment of drinking water.

## 2) Incident and risk management: Leading continuous improvement of the industry’s approach to incident and risk management through:

- Supporting water companies in planning for and managing national and cross-sector incidents, including via active support to senior managers dealing with incidents.
- Acting as a key liaison with Defra and regulators during incidents and in

preparedness activities.

- Via our Operational Strategy Group, maintaining and lead development of our industry risk register - our analysis of all national level risks to continuation of services to customers and protection of the environment, driving progress on mitigation of the industry’s most significant strategic risks, with particular focus on drought, cyber security, power outages and chemicals.
- Supporting the design, delivery and follow-up of industry exercises, coordinating with companies and external partners on organisation and lessons learned and supporting implementation of agreed improvements.
- Support effective management of, and information sharing on, security risks through specialist industry fora, ensuring appropriate governance and confidentiality.

# Skills and experience

## About you

The successful candidate will have the following attributes.

### Essential

- Experience in incident management, risk management or resilience, ideally within regulated or infrastructure sectors.
- Experience in policy development – developing recommendations for industry, government and regulators to improve public policy outcomes.
- Strong stakeholder management skills, including experience working with senior stakeholders, government and regulators.
- Ability to operate calmly and credibly in high-pressure and time-critical situations.
- Experience in horizon scanning and risk assessment and pre-emptively developing response structures and policies.
- Ability to think creatively in developing and advocating for new policy responses that reduce the risk of emergency events occurring and/or reduce the impact of emergency events.
- Clear and concise written communication skills, including drafting briefings, policy papers, summaries and lessons learned reports.
- Comfortable working independently while contributing effectively to a small, collaborative team.
- Ability to lead small discrete policy analysis projects on areas of interest, for example the impact of power outages on water industry core operations.

### Desirable

- Experience of handling and interpreting data.
- Knowledge of water industry processes including resilience arrangements.

# About Water UK

Water UK represents all 17 of the water companies across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In addition, our associate members include new market entrants and water providers in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Water UK members range from government-owned and not-for-profit companies to some of the UK's largest enterprises listed in the FTSE100.

Our job is to act as a force for good by understanding the biggest challenges facing the sector and solving them. Our activity ranges from developing long-term plans to suggesting legislation to running national behaviour change campaigns.

Some recent areas of focus include:

- The increasing pressures to public water supply and the environment from drought. We are responding with work on [leakage](#), [new reservoirs and water transfers](#), and a national campaign to [reduce wasted water](#).
- Achieving faster progress on sewage spills at lower cost to the customer (for example, by leading the [work on options](#), setting out a [plan of action](#) and campaigning to [reduce sewer blockages](#)).
- Improving the broader condition of rivers and seas (for example, by reducing pollutants from sewage works or [supporting the creation of new wetlands](#) and other nature-based treatment).
- Responding to new threats to drinking water, like microplastics and [persistent toxic chemicals](#).
- Providing better support for [vulnerable customers](#) and those [struggling with bills](#).
- [Securing investment](#) for dealing with these challenges, considering how they could better deal with specific problems such as the [ageing state of water infrastructure](#), and intervening in [regulatory appeals](#).
- Producing comprehensive submissions on behalf of industry to influence [reviews of regulation](#), [independent commissions](#) and [parliamentary inquiries](#).
- Promoting education, [information](#) and understanding and working very closely with the most senior leaders across the UK's water companies, non-governmental organisations, investors, regulators and government departments – as well as international bodies and companies abroad.



# Working for Water UK

**Water UK is a small, friendly and high-performing organisation.**

Our work is typically fast-paced and offers engagement with and exposure to very senior decision makers. There is an opportunity to have a real and enduring impact for customers and the environment. The work is high-profile, varied and interesting.

1. Competitive salary
2. Discretionary bonus of up to 25% of salary
3. Private medical insurance and dental coverage
4. 27 working days' holiday, with the option to 'buy' more annual leave if you wish
5. Pension scheme – employee 5%, employer 6%
6. Life assurance from date of joining

**We are based in central London, close to St James's Park. All roles are offered on a hybrid basis with an expectation of 3 to 4 days a week in the office.**

