

Monthly water situation report: East Anglia

1 Summary - January 2026

East Anglia rainfall for January 2026 ranged from 129% to 198% of the long term average [LTA] for the month. The average soil moisture deficit [SMD] decreased by 14mm since December, all catchments ending January with deficits below 10mm. River flows increased significantly following the month's high rainfall, with above average flows found across much of the region. North-western catchments continue to display below normal flow having, receiving comparatively less rainfall. Groundwater levels have continued to increase at almost of sites, more than half are still below normal levels for the time of year. Public water supply reservoirs ended January 2026 with levels ranging from 59% to 91% of their full storage capacities.

1.1 Rainfall

January 2026 rainfall totals across East Anglia ranged from 129% to 198% of the long term average for the month. The East Suffolk and North Essex catchments received the highest total rainfalls, receiving 189% and 198% of their long term averages respectively. All catchments recorded above normal or higher rainfall for January. Over the past 3 months, all catchments have recorded above normal or higher rainfall with the exception of South Essex, recording normal levels though still above average at 106% of its LTA.

1.2 Soil moisture deficit and recharge

The soil moisture deficit for East Anglia at the end of January 2026 was 4mm, which is normal for the time of year. All catchments had SMDs below 10mm, with half being 5mm above or below the LTA, and the other half instead being 6mm to 25mm below.

1.3 River flows

Following high rainfall in all catchments, the January 2026 month mean flows at most sites have increased significantly since December 2025, with most catchments reporting normal or higher flows, with the Colne being the only river recording notably high flows at 193% of the LTA. The northern rivers; Heacham, Burn and Nar, were instead below normal, having started the month particularly low and showing more gradual recovery compared to other river's flashy responses.

1.4 Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels have begun or continued to rise at all reporting sites with available data, with the exception of Therfield which continues to fall. Over half of the reporting stations have below normal or lower levels for the time of year, with the other half returning either normal or higher. Breckland and Bircham Newton in the central and northern areas are notably low while Fringford in the west was the only site with notably high levels for the time of year.

1.5 Reservoir stocks

All public water supply reservoirs have seen a net increase in storage in January 2026, with the exception of Ardleigh which only started increasing towards the end of the month. At the end of the month, levels ranged from 59% to 91% of the full storage capacity, and only Alton was above its normal operating curve.

1.6 Forward look

1.6.1 Probabilistic ensemble projections for river flows at key sites

River flow projections at all sites show a high probability of normal or higher flows for March 2026. The Ouse has the lowest probability of normal or greater flows, and is the only site which has a higher probability of below normal or lower flows.

1.6.2 Probabilistic ensemble projections for groundwater levels in key aquifers

Groundwater projections for March 2026 have a high probability of normal levels or higher at most sites. Newmarket and Kenninghall instead have a higher probability of below normal levels by the End of March.

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*[SMD]: soil moisture deficits

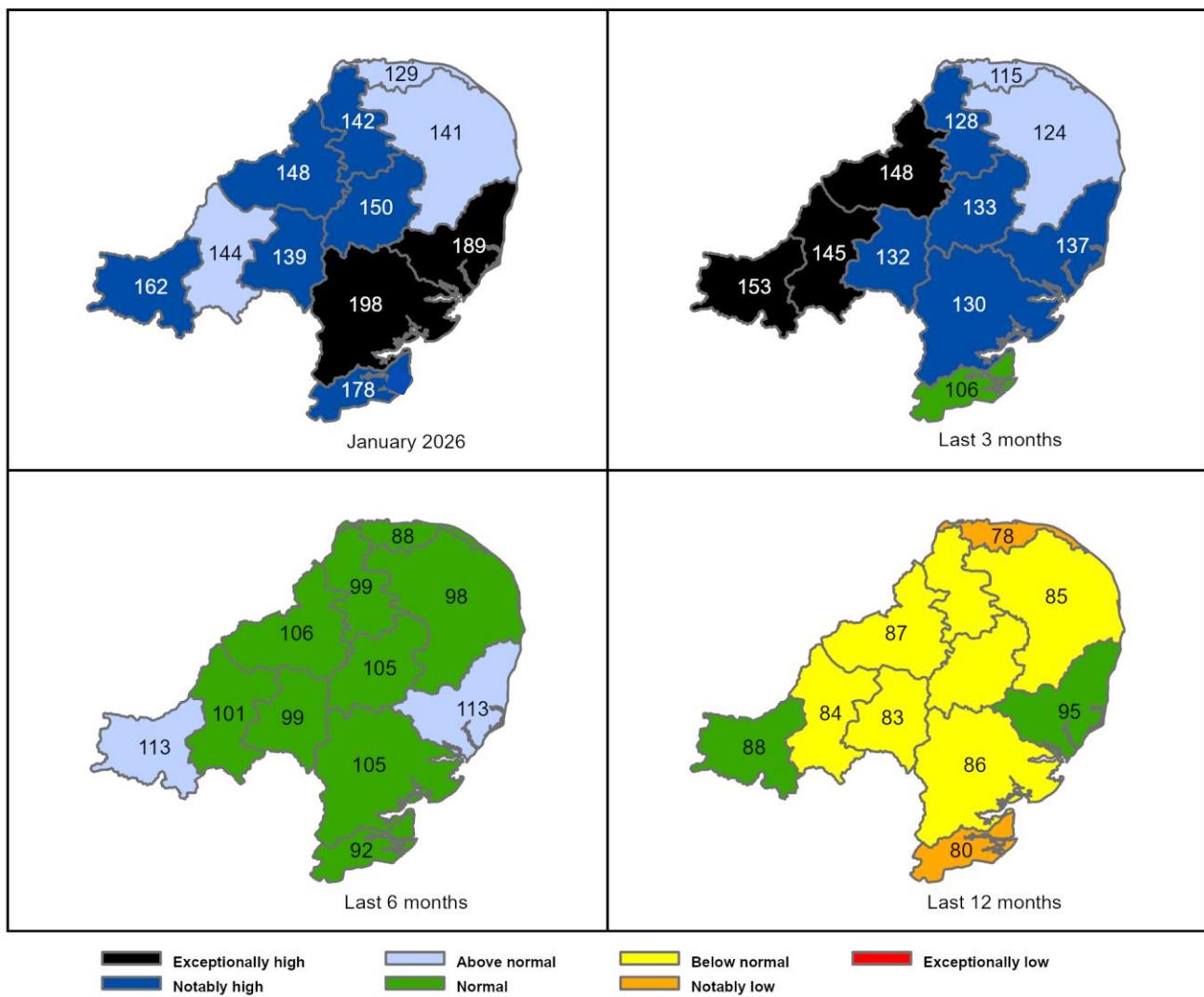
*[LTA]: long term average

Contact Details: 03708 506 506

2 Rainfall

2.1 Rainfall map

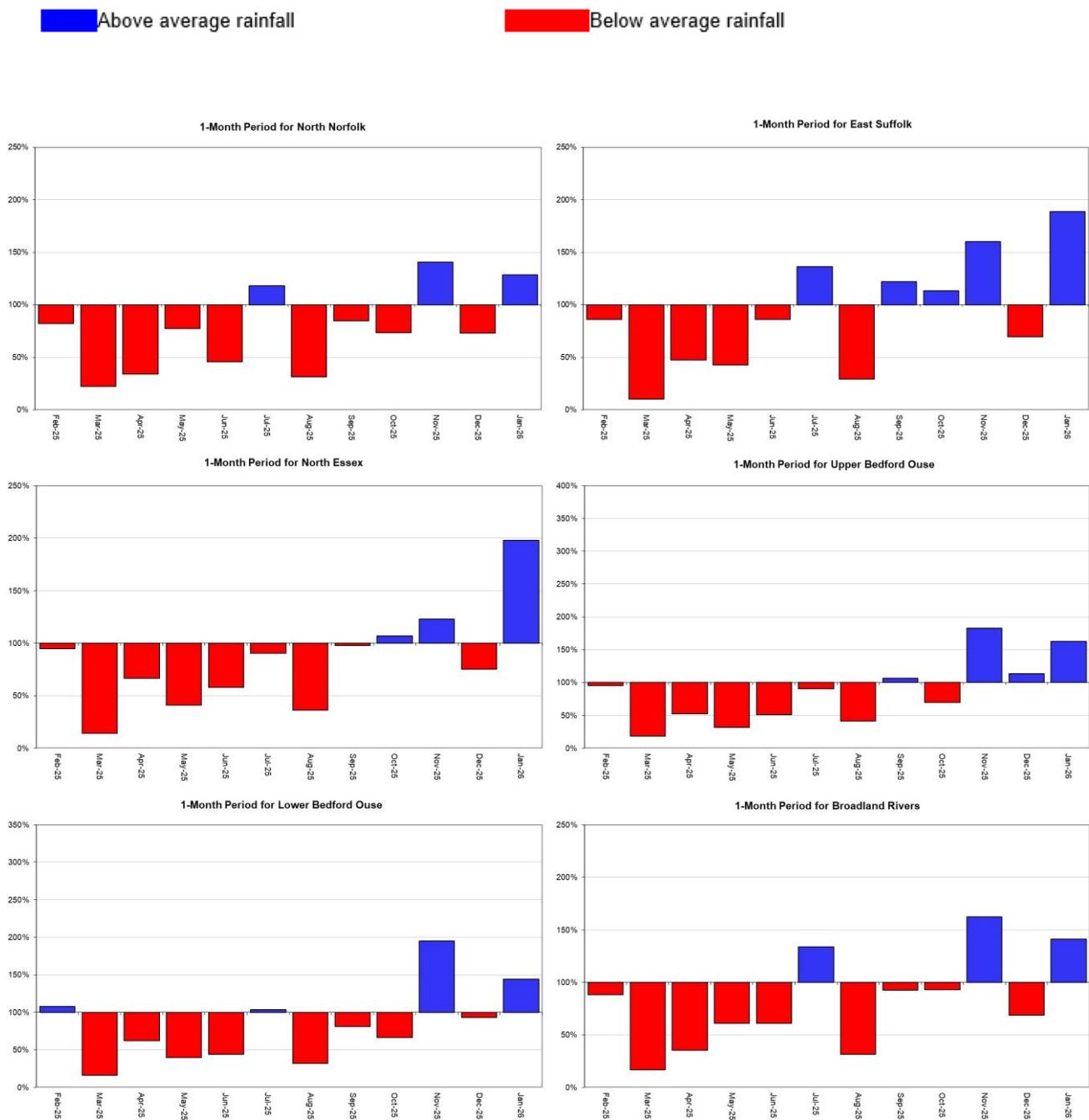
Figure 2.1: Total rainfall for hydrological areas across East Anglia, expressed as a percentage of long term average rainfall for the current month (up to 31 January 2026), the last 3 months, the last 6 months, and the last 12 months. Category classes are based on an analysis of respective historic totals. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

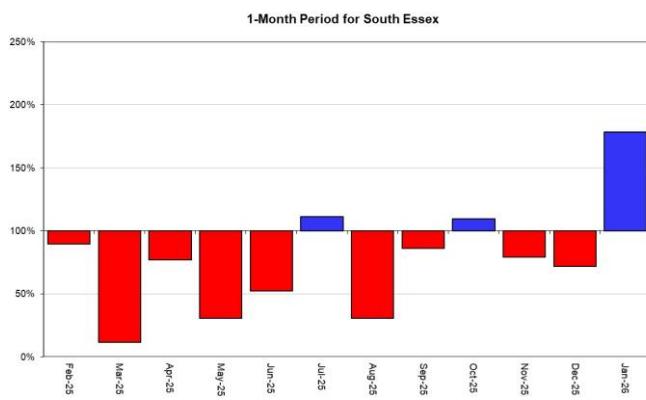
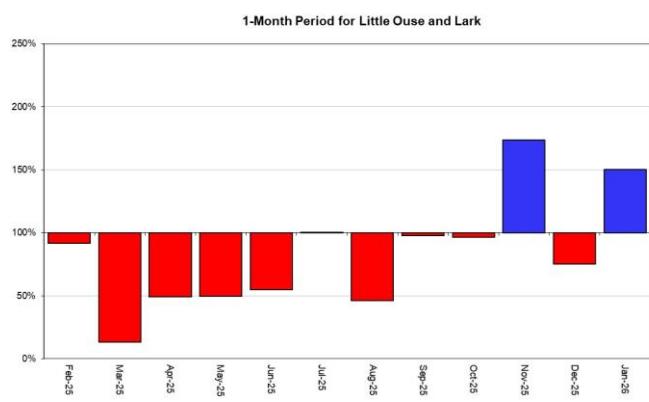
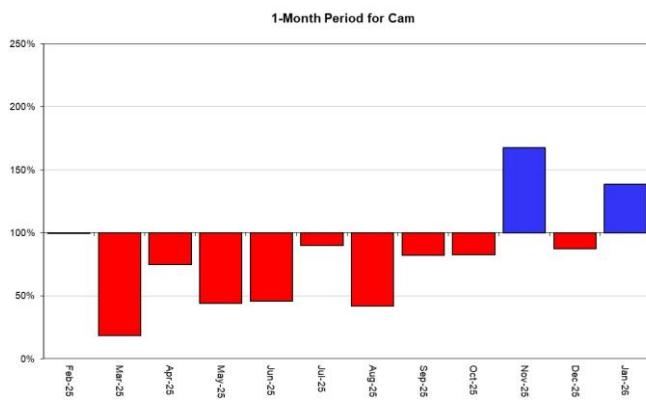
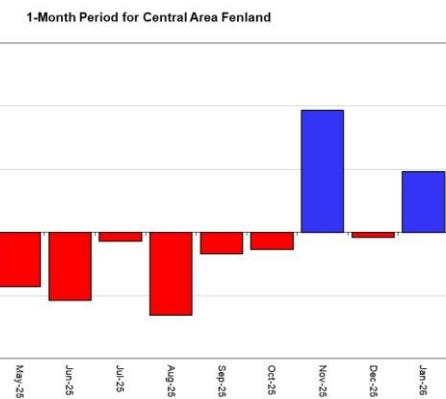
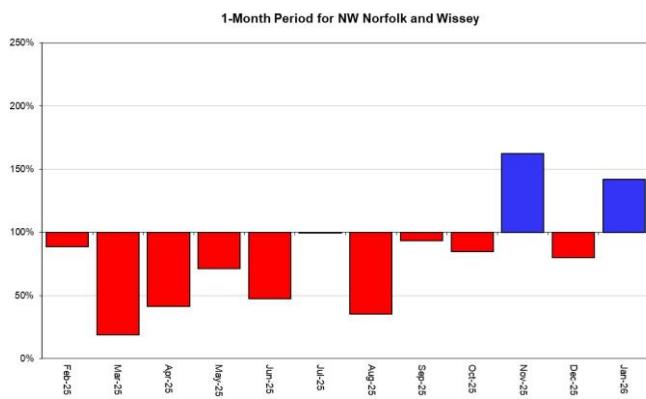


HadUK data based on the Met Office 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from rain gauges (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026). Provisional data based on Environment Agency 1km gridded rainfall dataset derived from Environment Agency intensity rain gauges. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

2.2 Rainfall charts

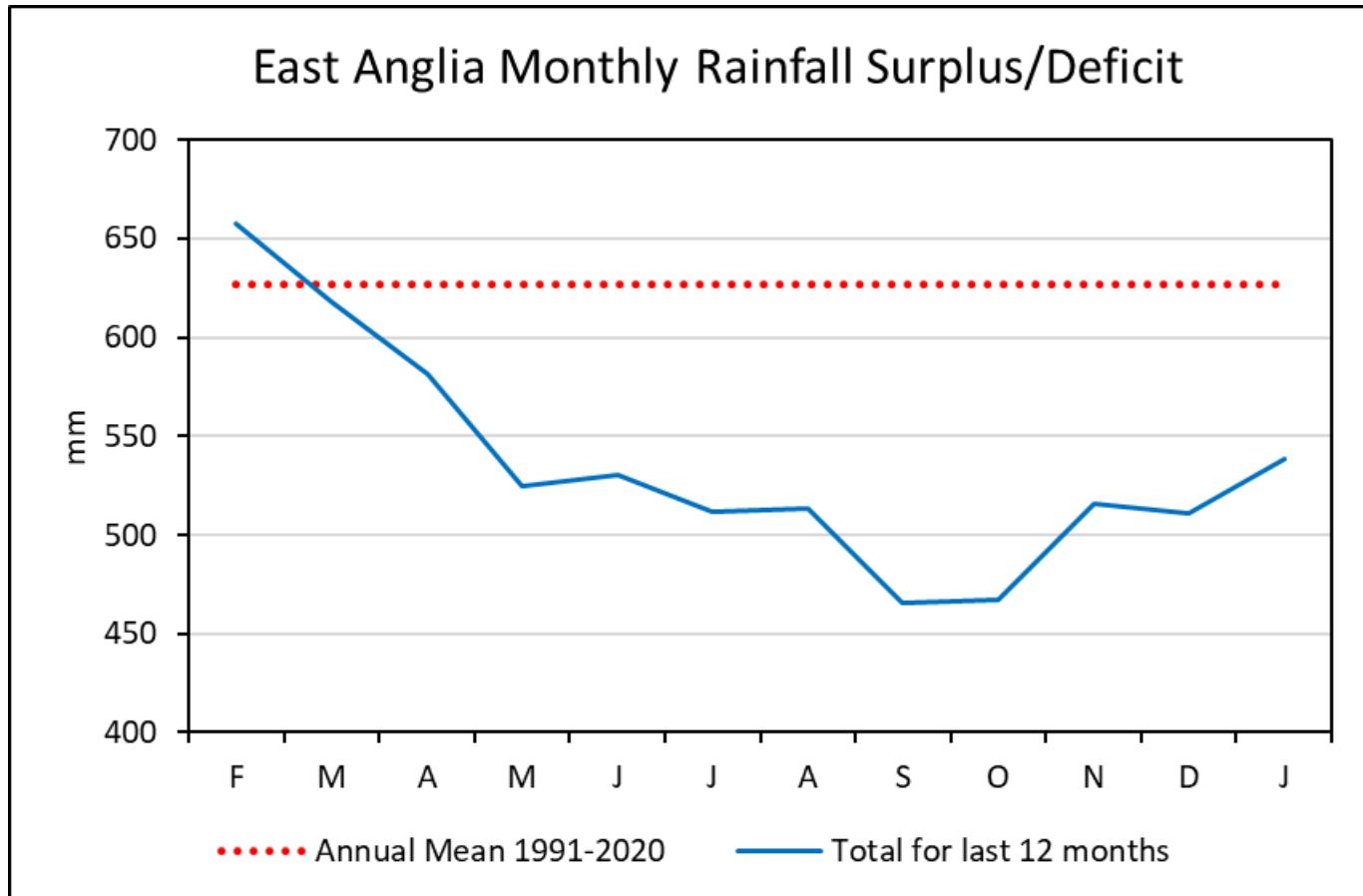
Figure 2.2: Monthly rainfall totals for the past 12 months as a percentage of the 1991 to 2020 long term average for each region and for England.





HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

2.3 Monthly rainfall surplus/deficit chart



HadUK rainfall data. (Source: Met Office. Crown copyright, 2026).

3 Soil moisture deficit

3.1 Soil moisture deficit map

Figure 3.1: Soil moisture deficit values for 31 January 2026. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.

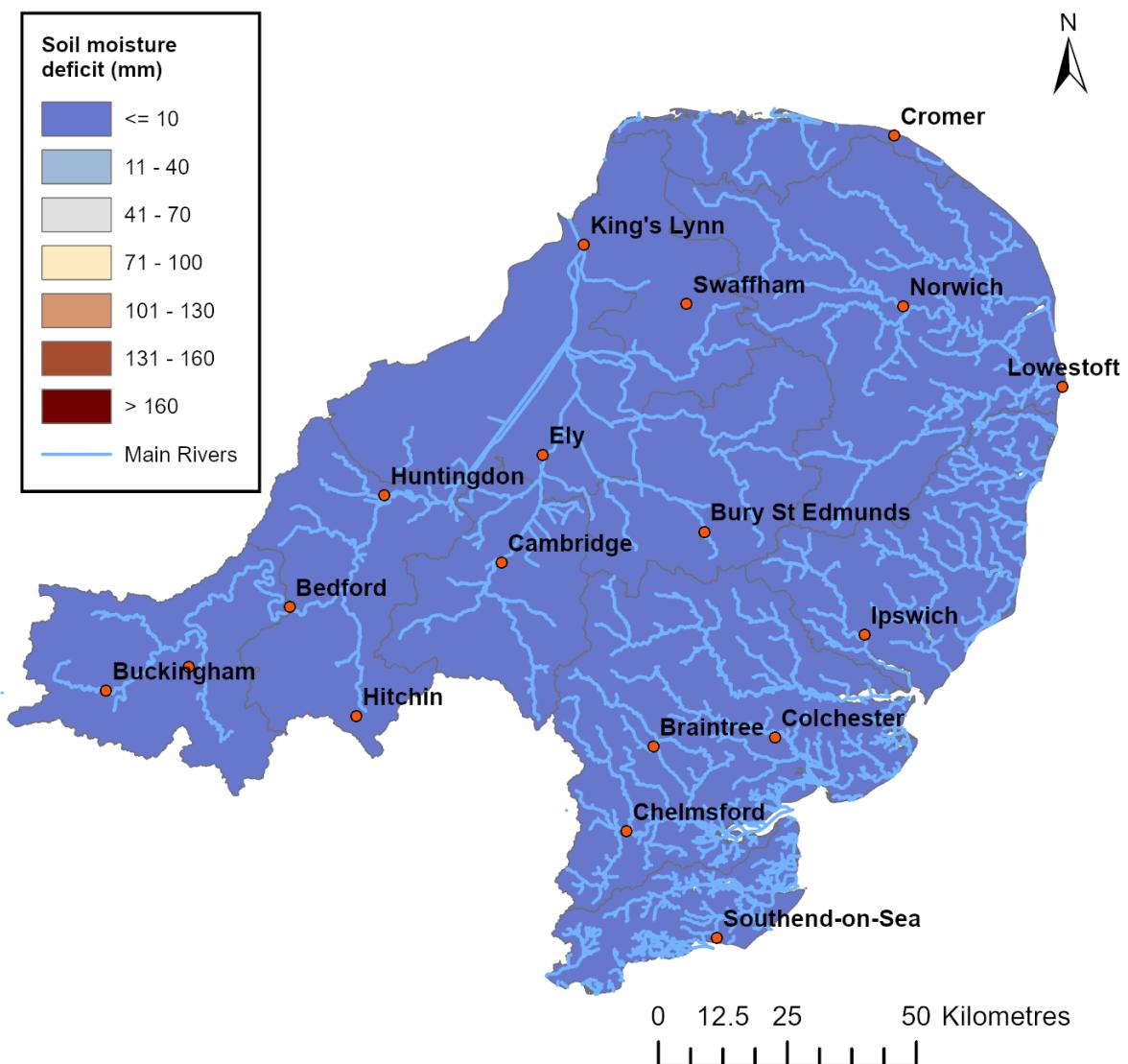
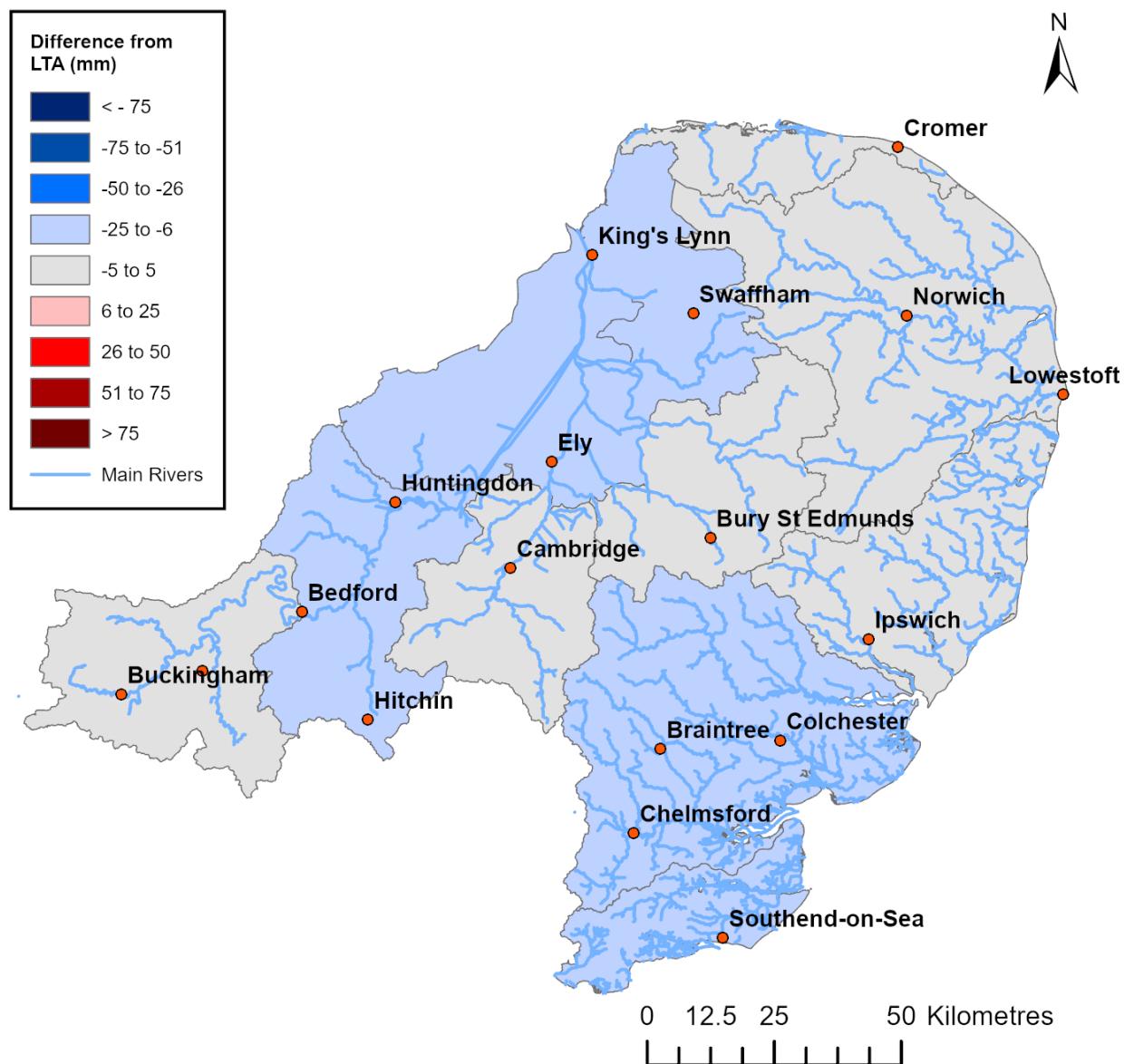


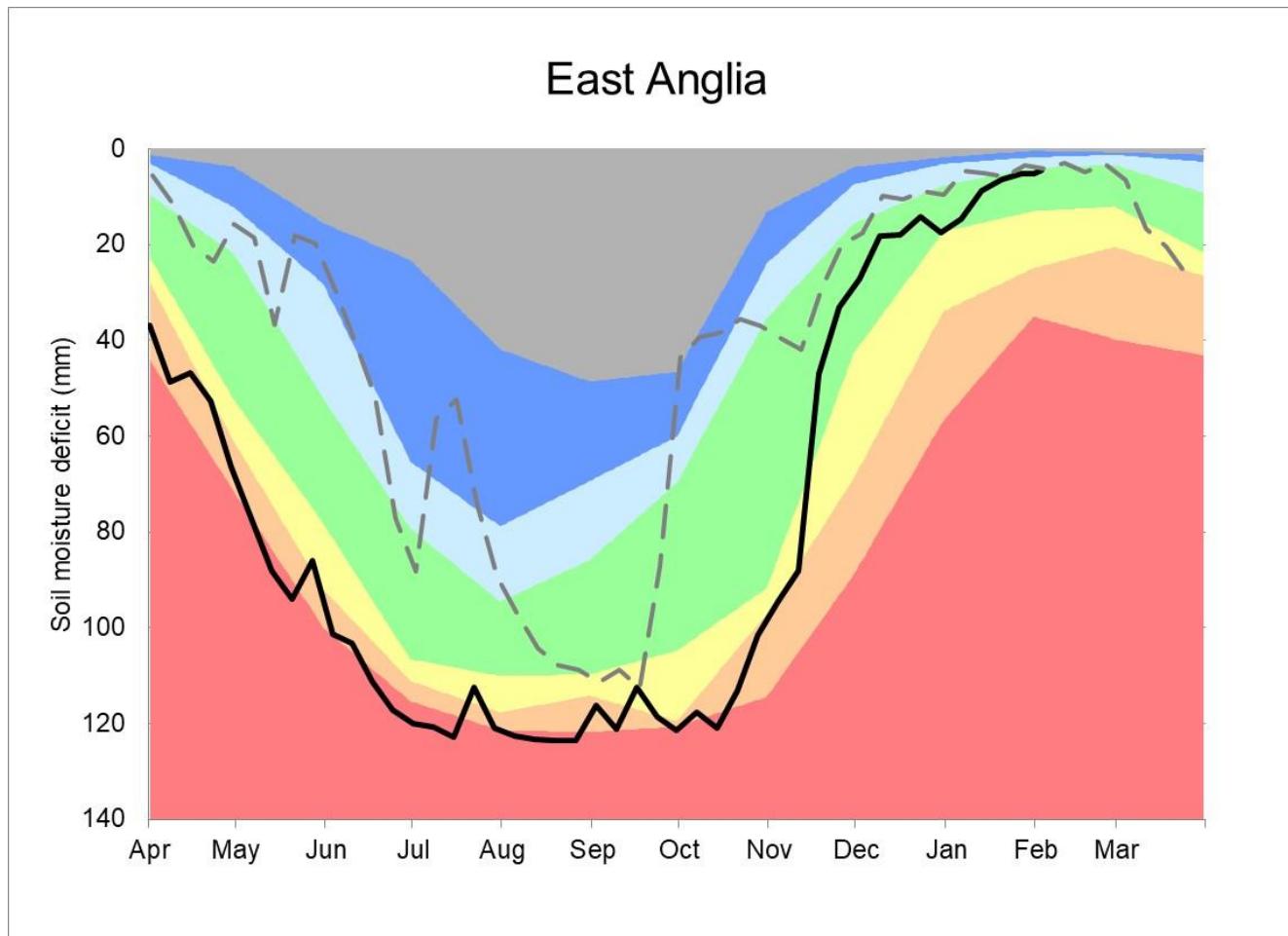
Figure 3.2: Difference between soil moisture deficit values for 31 January 2026 and the long term average soil moisture deficit values for the end of January. Values based on the weekly MORECS data for real land use.



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3.2 Soil moisture deficit charts

Figure 3.2: Latest soil moisture deficit compared to an analysis of historic 1991 to 2020 long term data set. Weekly MORECS data for real land use.

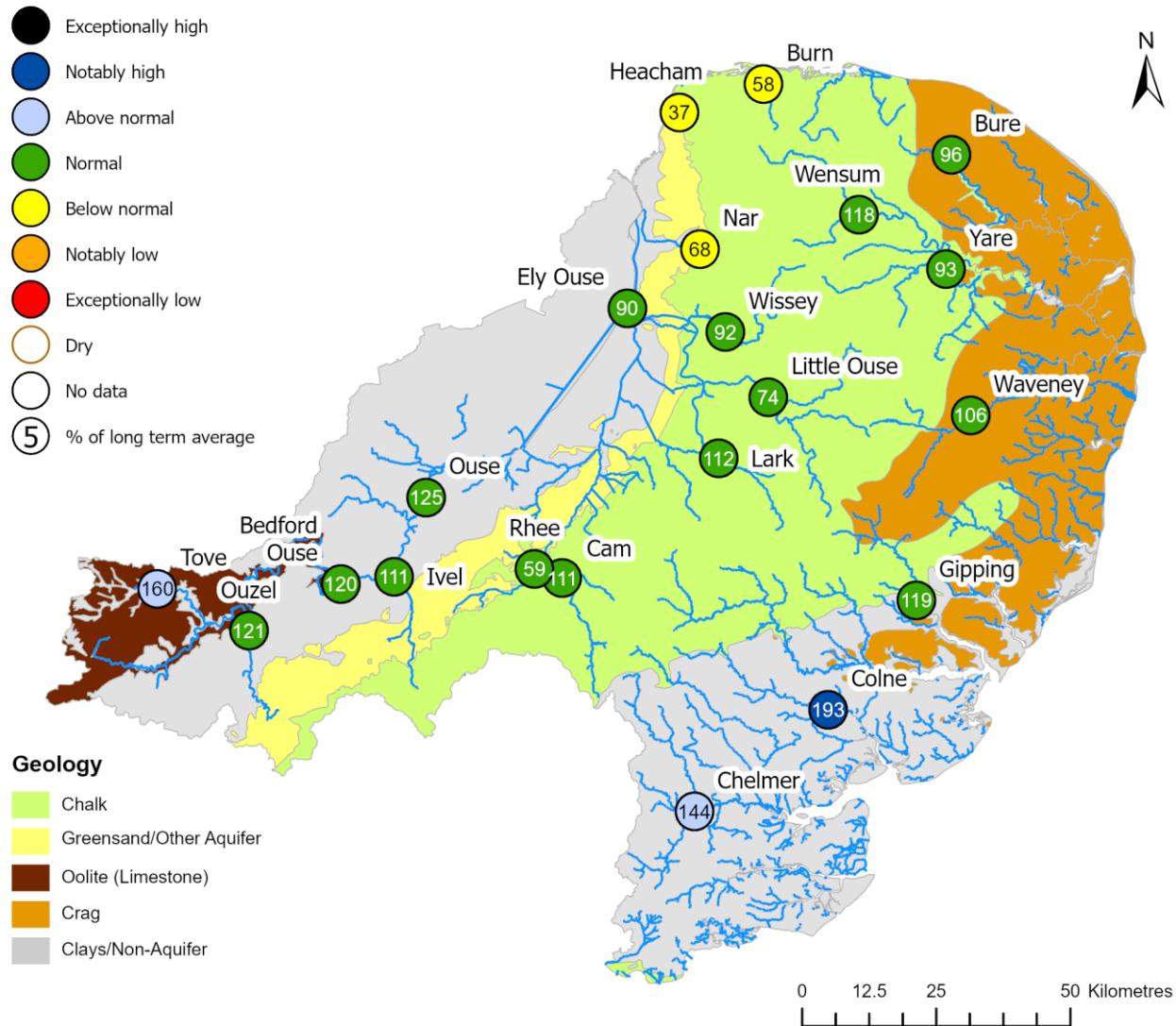


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4 River flows

4.1 River flows map

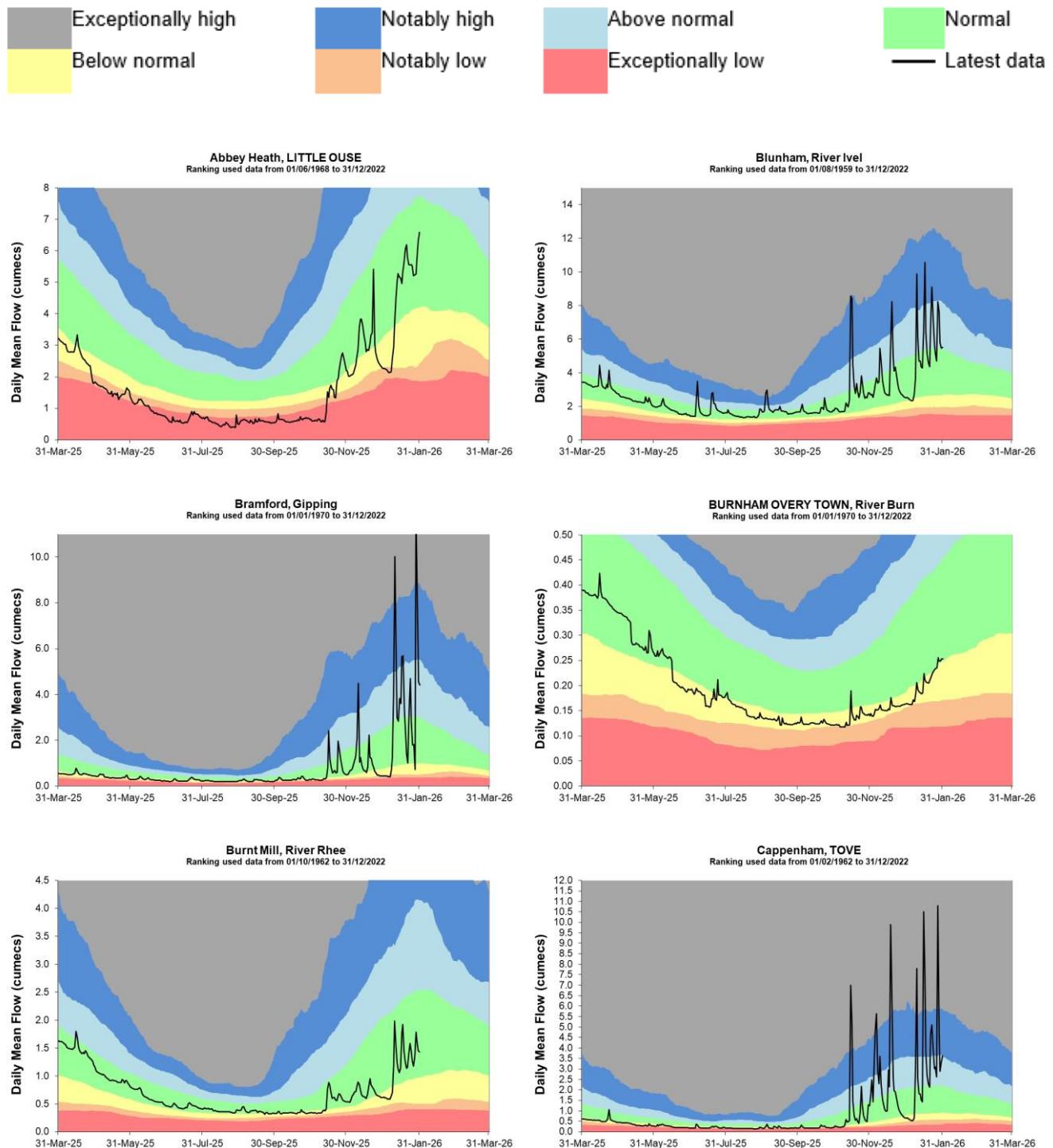
Figure 4.1: Monthly mean river flow for indicator sites for January 2026, expressed as a percentage of the respective long term average and classed relative to an analysis of historic January monthly means Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

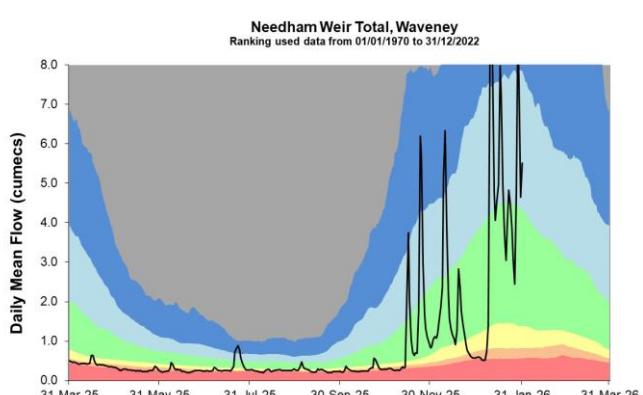
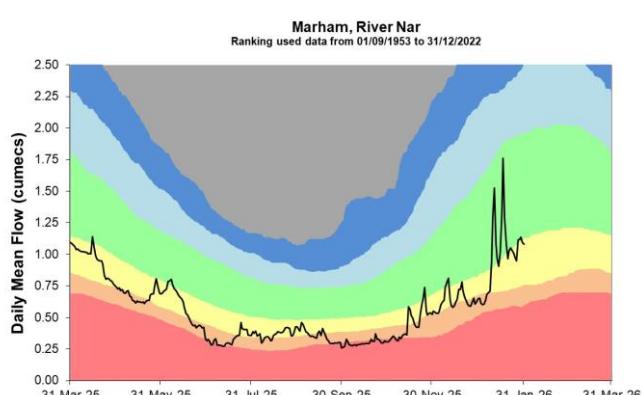
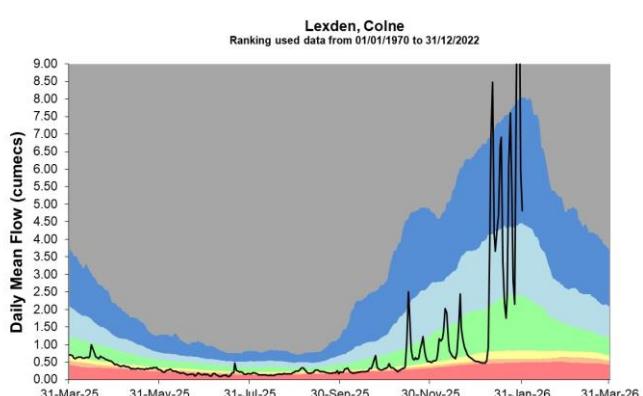
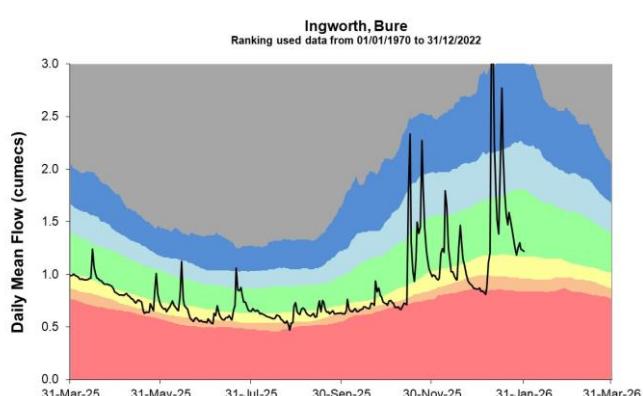
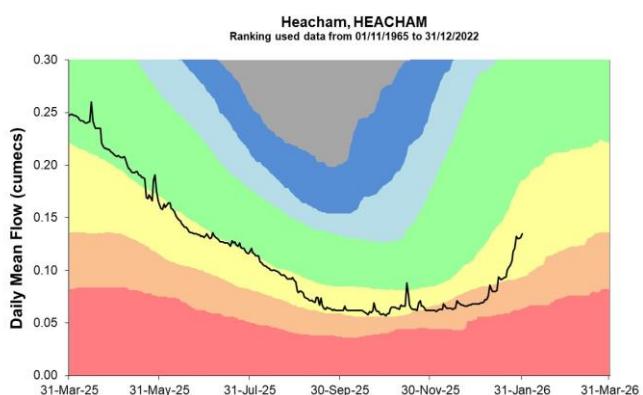
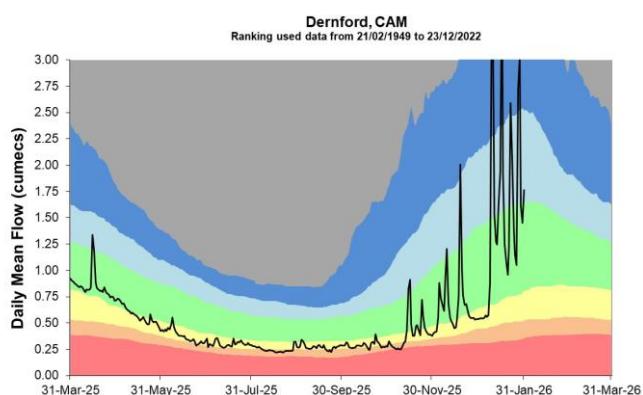
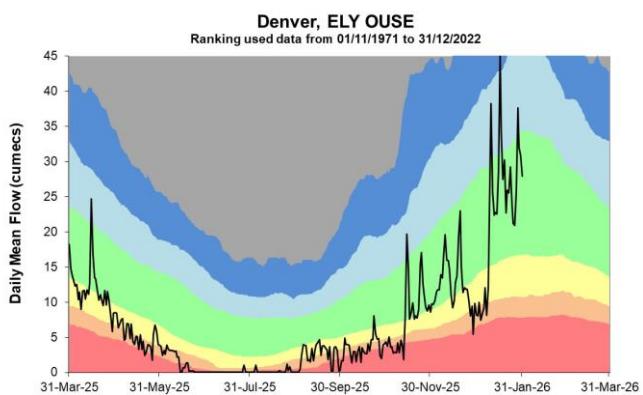
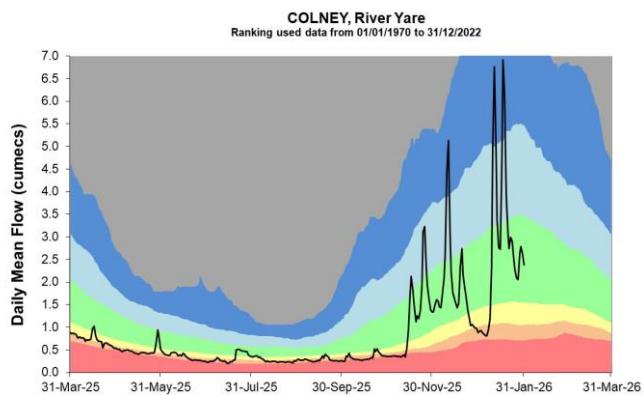


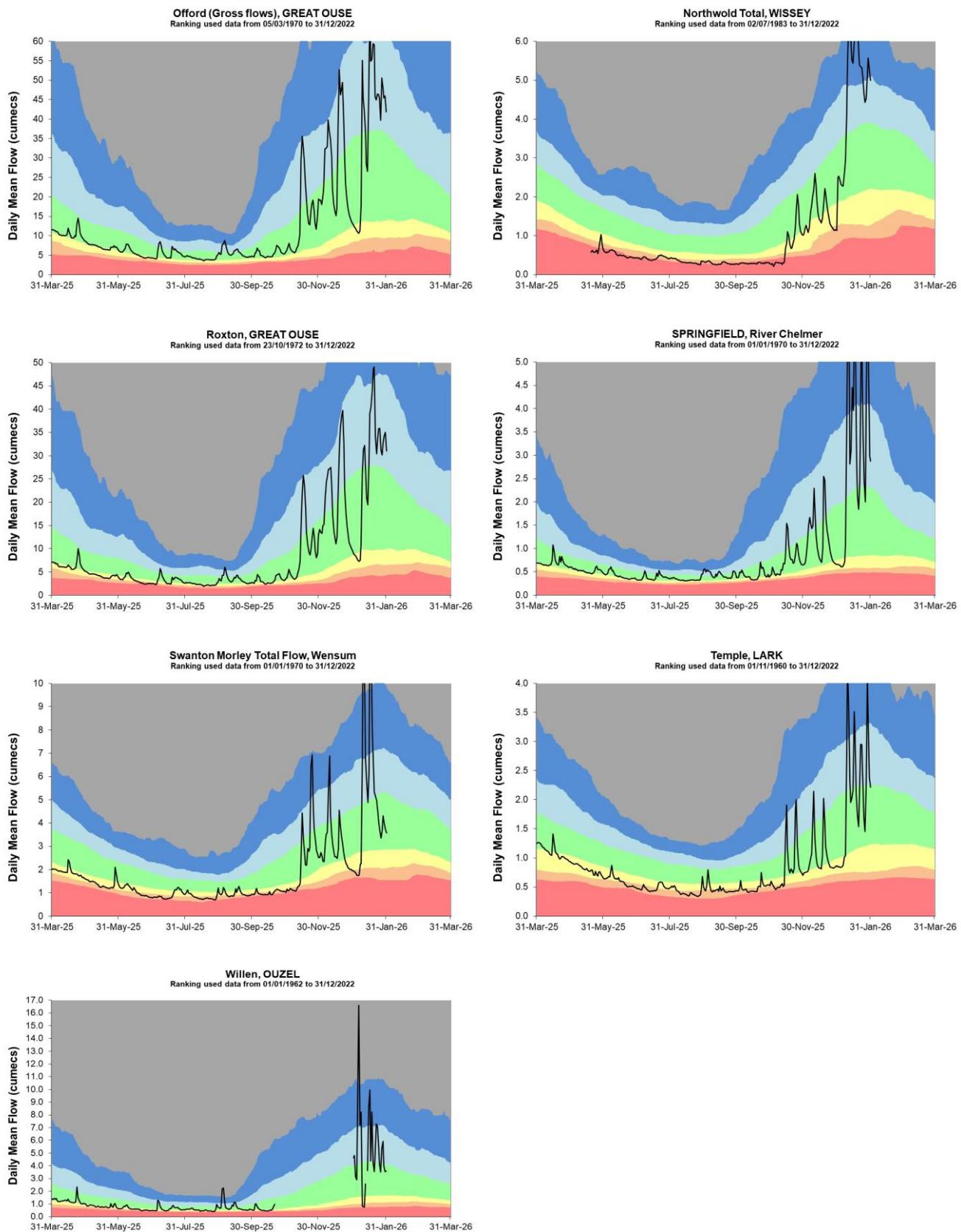
(Source: Environment Agency). Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS copyright NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100024198, 2026.

4.2 River flow charts

Figure 4.2: Daily mean river flow for index sites over the past year, compared to an analysis of historic daily mean flows, and long term maximum and minimum flows.







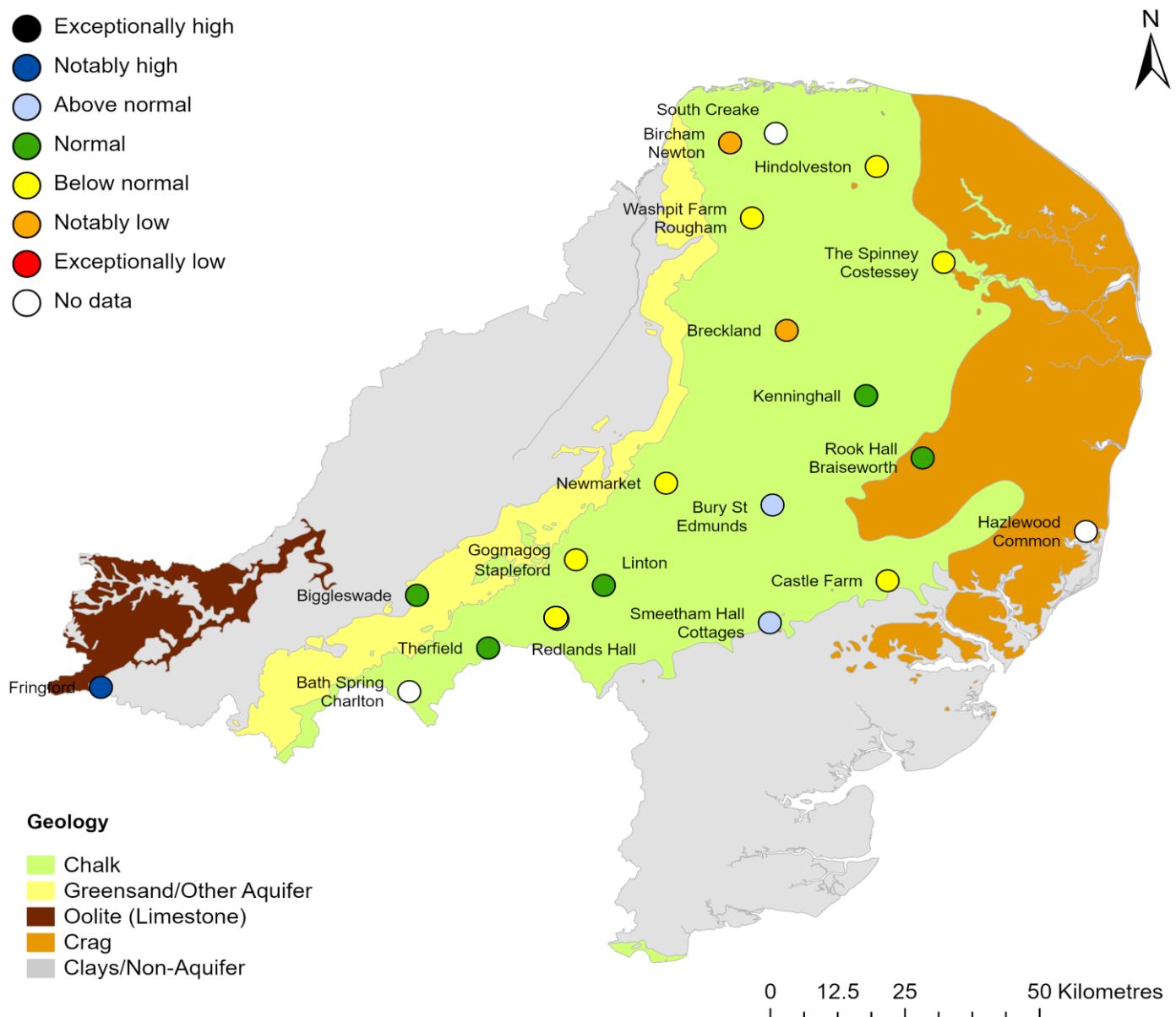
Source: Environment Agency.

5 Groundwater levels

5.1 Groundwater levels map

Figure 5.1: Groundwater levels for indicator sites at the end of January 2026, classed relative to an analysis of respective historic January levels. Table available in the appendices with detailed information.

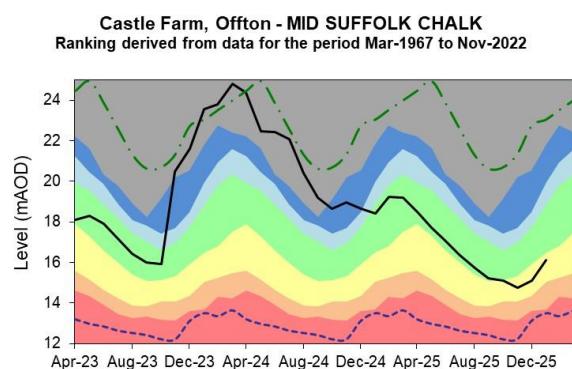
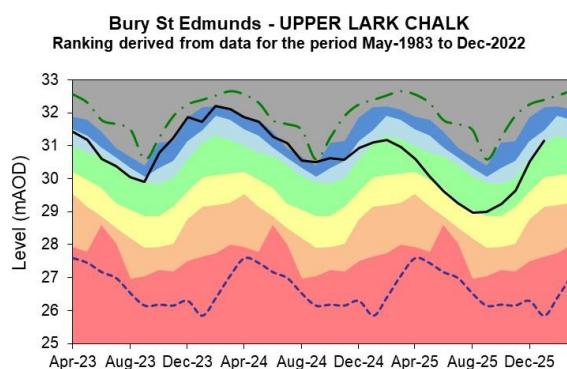
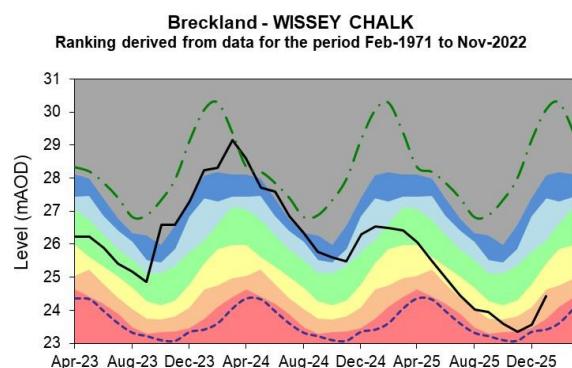
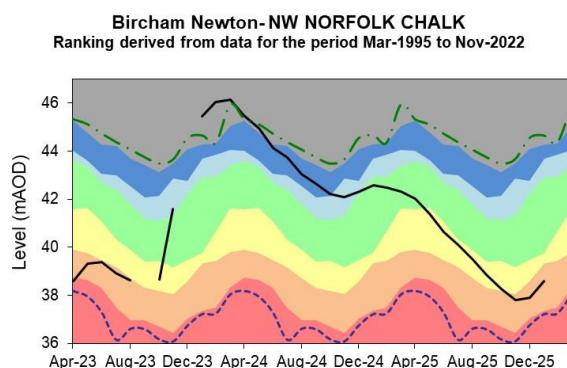
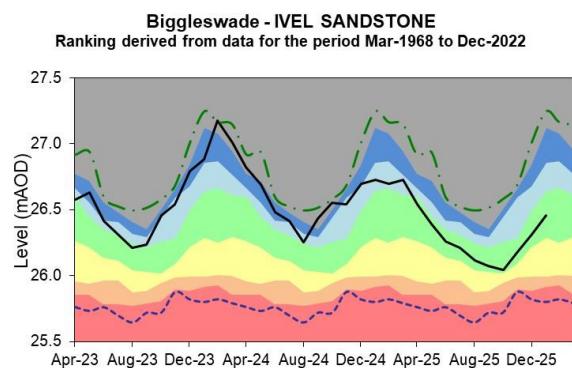
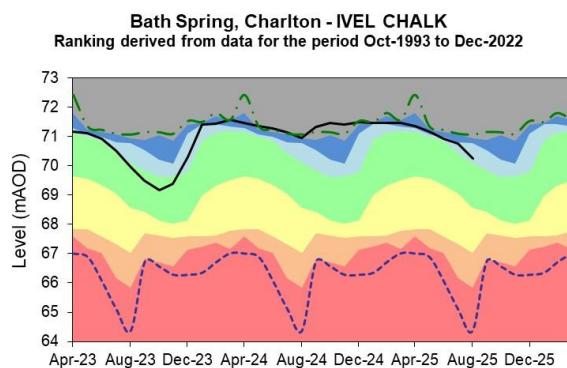
- Exceptionally high
- Notably high
- Above normal
- Normal
- Below normal
- Notably low
- Exceptionally low
- No data

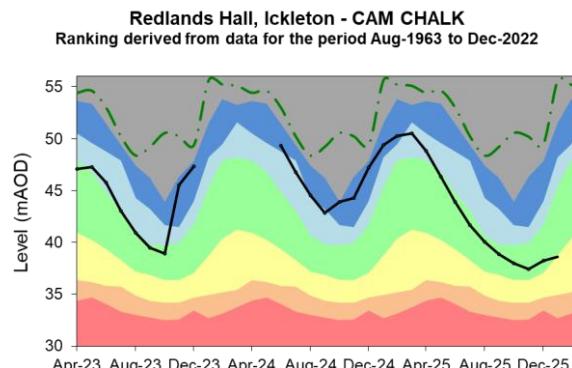
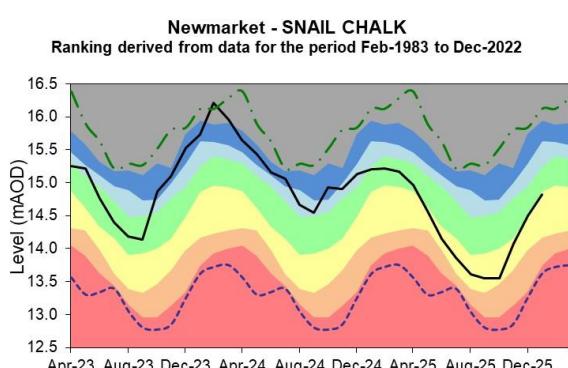
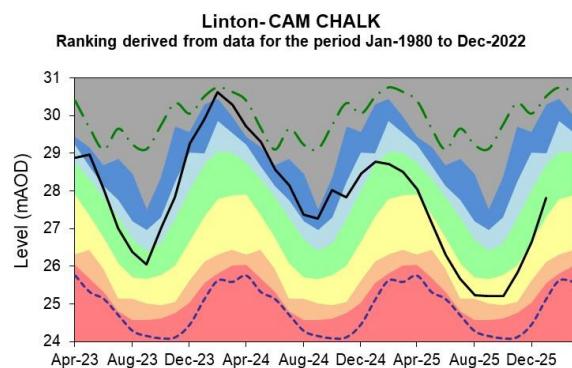
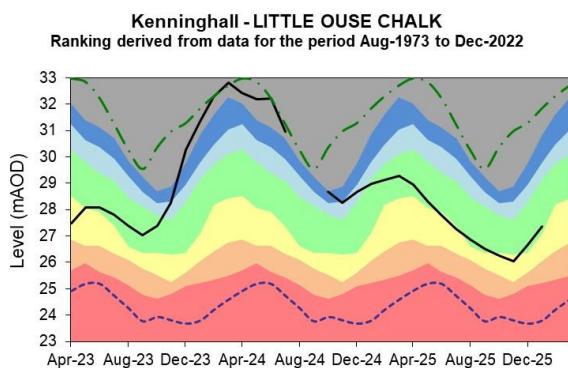
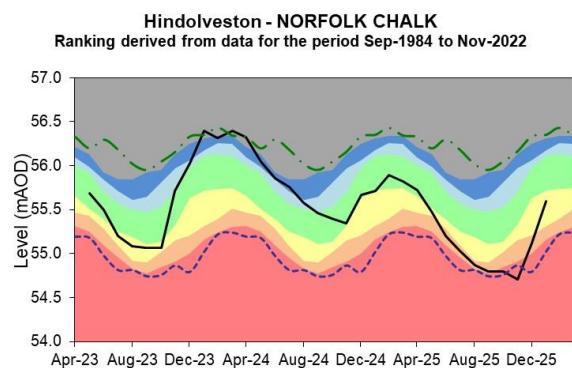
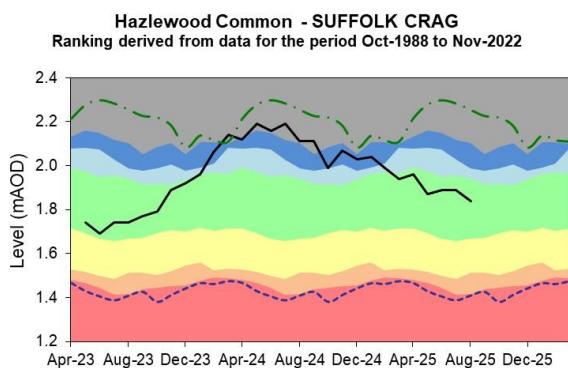
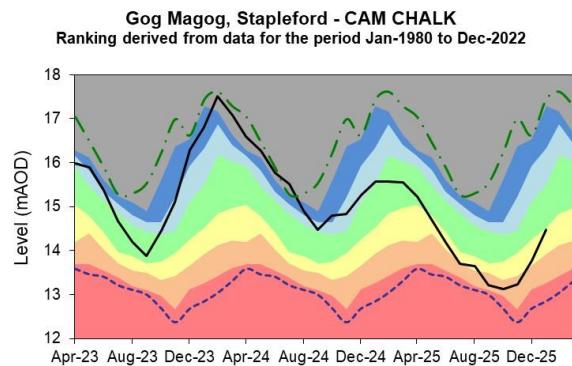
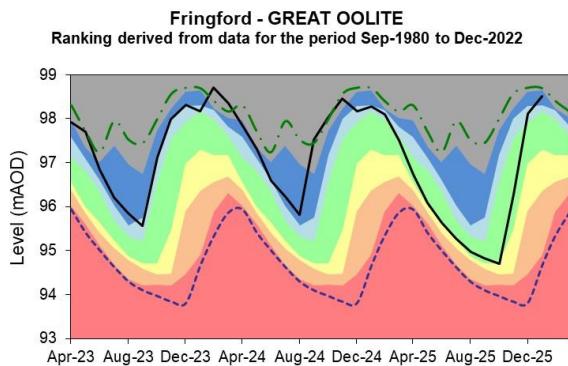


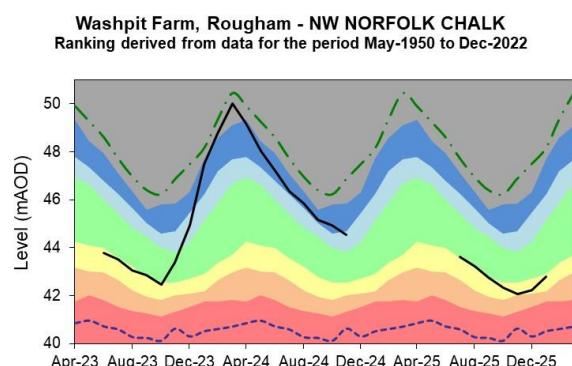
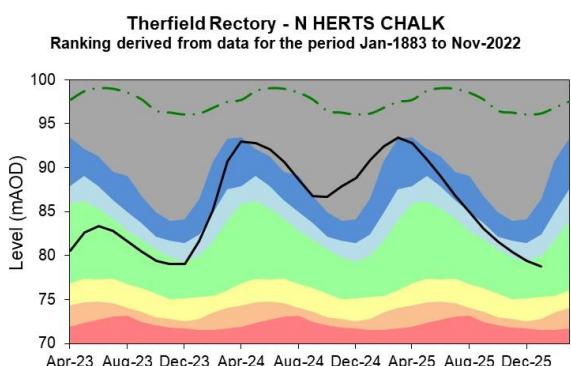
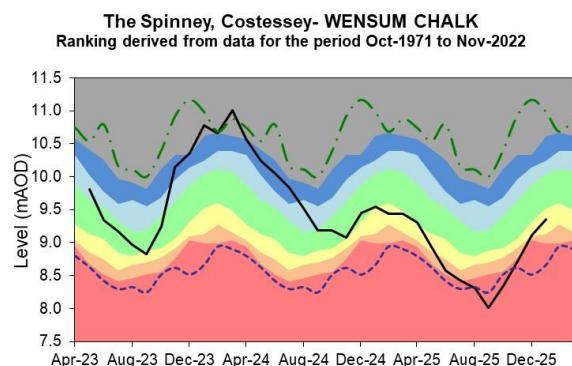
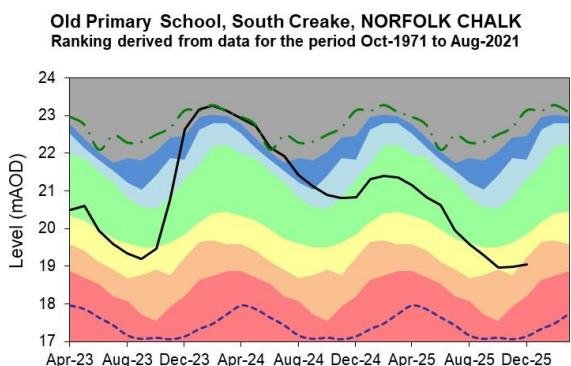
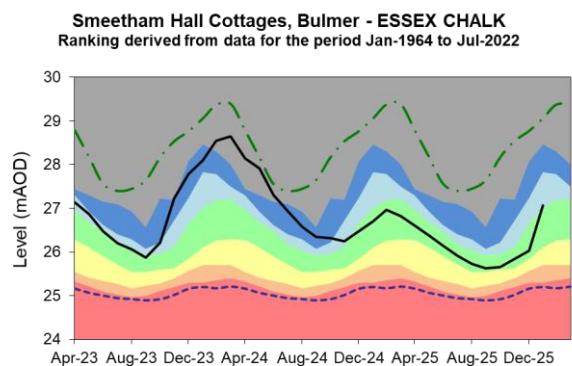
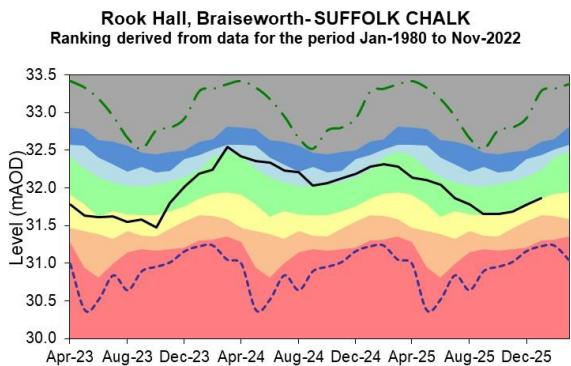
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5.2 Groundwater level charts

Figure 5.2: End of month groundwater levels at index groundwater level sites for major aquifers. 22 months compared to an analysis of historic end of month levels and long term maximum and minimum levels.







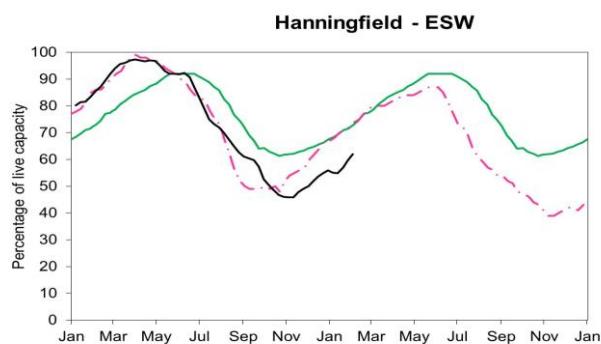
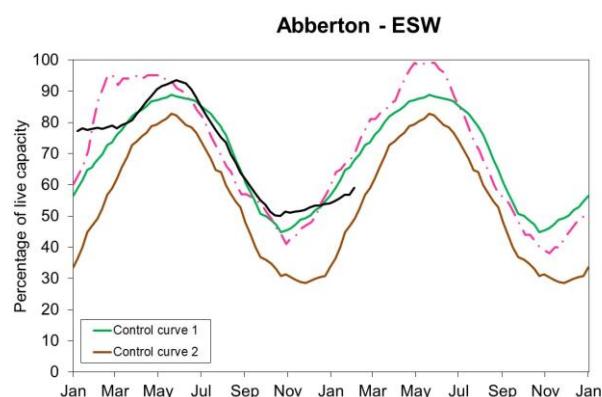
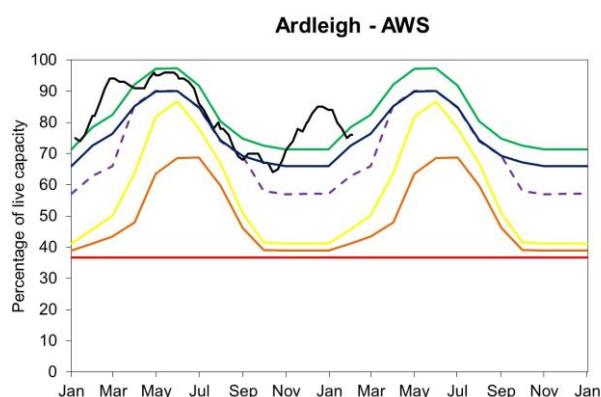
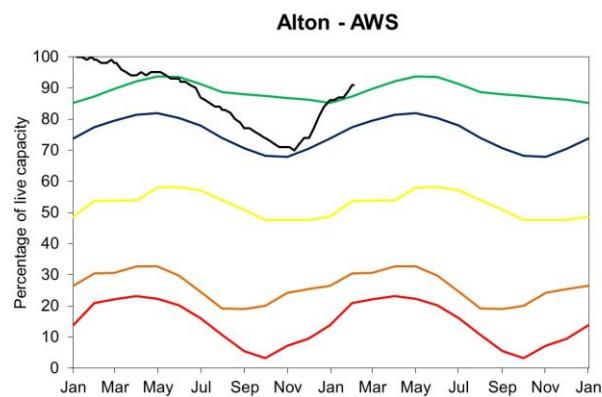
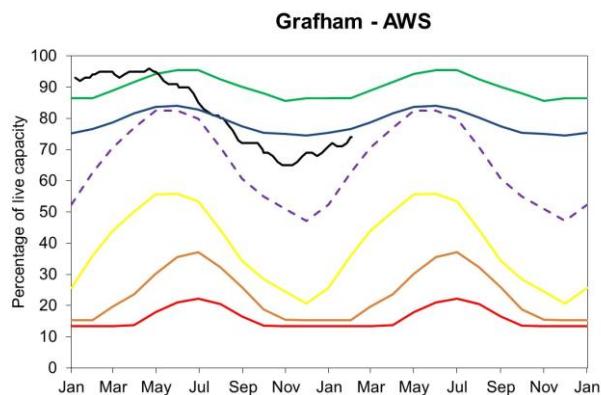
Source: Environment Agency, 2026.

6 Reservoir stocks

Figure 6.1: End of month regional reservoir stocks compared to the normal operating curve, drought curve and dry 1995-1996 stocks. Note: Historic records of individual reservoirs and reservoir groups making up the regional values vary in length.

— 2025-2026 — Normal Operating Curve — Drought Curve - - - 1995-1996

— Level 1 — Level 2 — Level 3 — Level 4

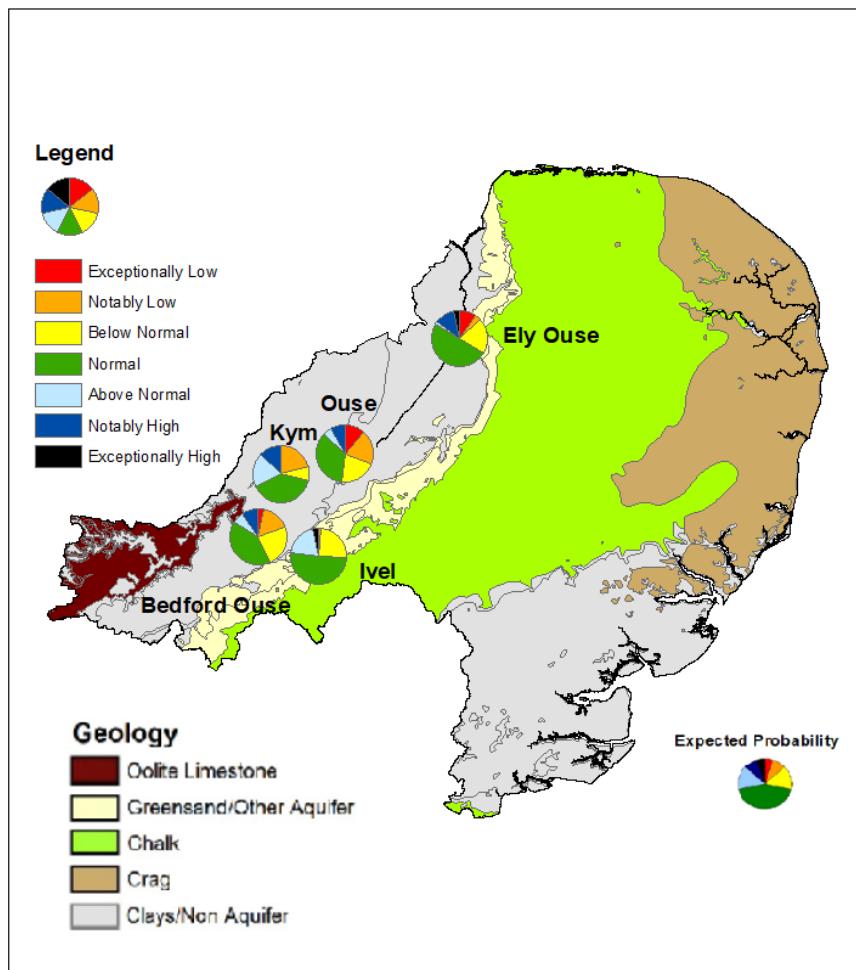


(Source: water companies. For more information on Anglian Water's reservoir level curves, please see Appendix 4 in their [Drought Plan](#)).

7 Forward look

7.1 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in March 2026

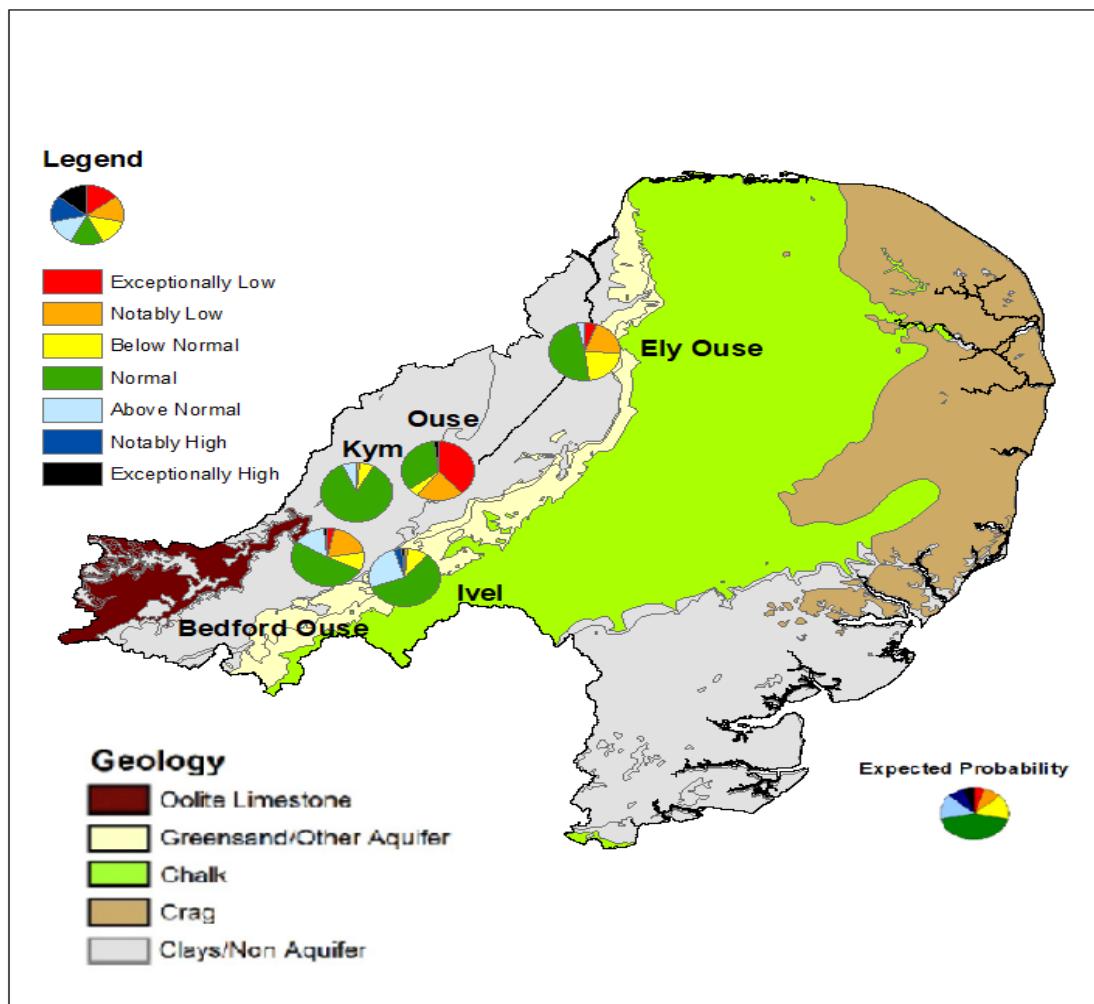
Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the surface water flow at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Environment Agency) Geological map reproduced with kind permission from UK Groundwater Forum, BGS © NERC. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Environment Agency, 100026380, 2026.

7.2 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in June 2026

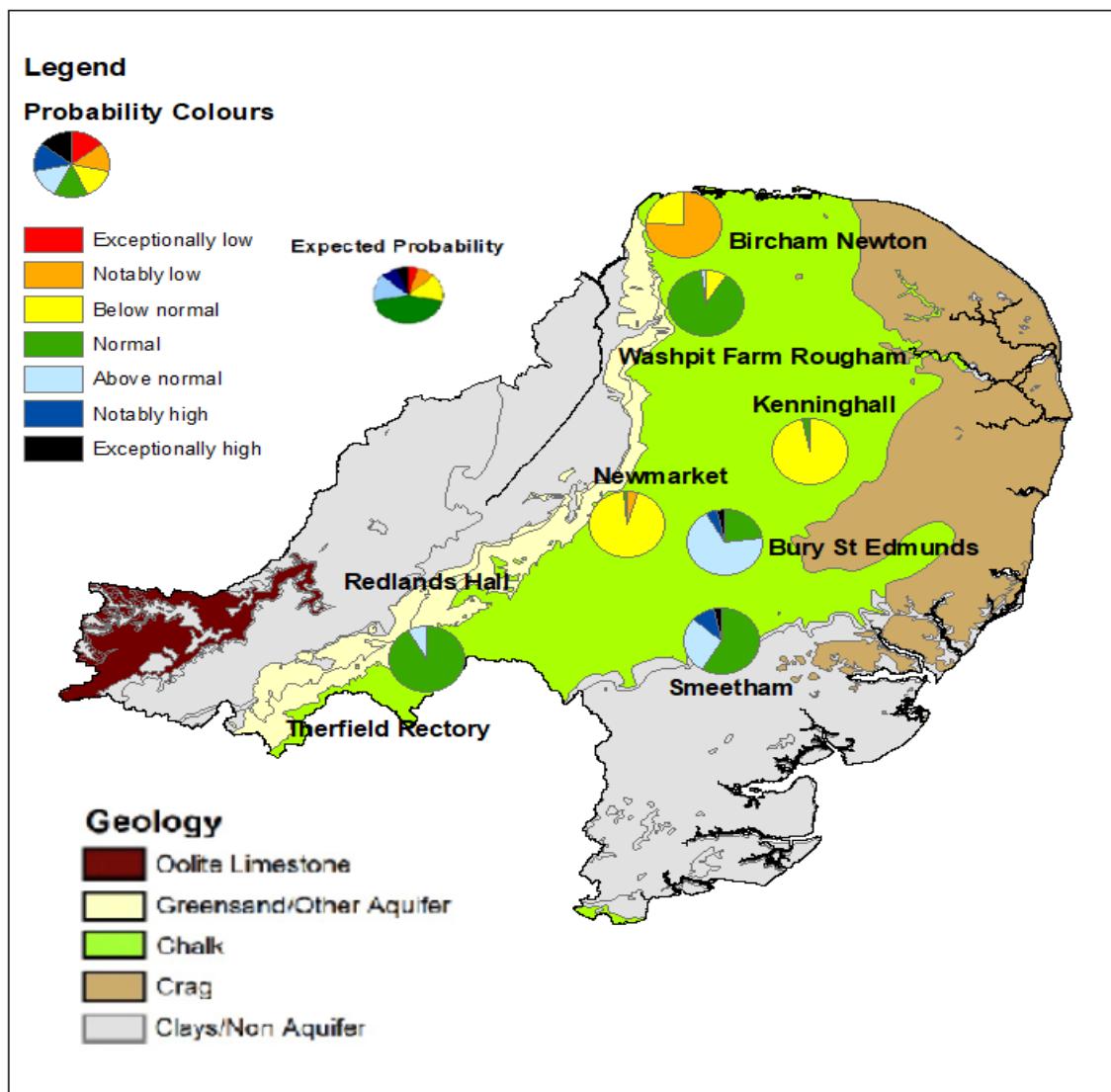
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7.3 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in March 2026

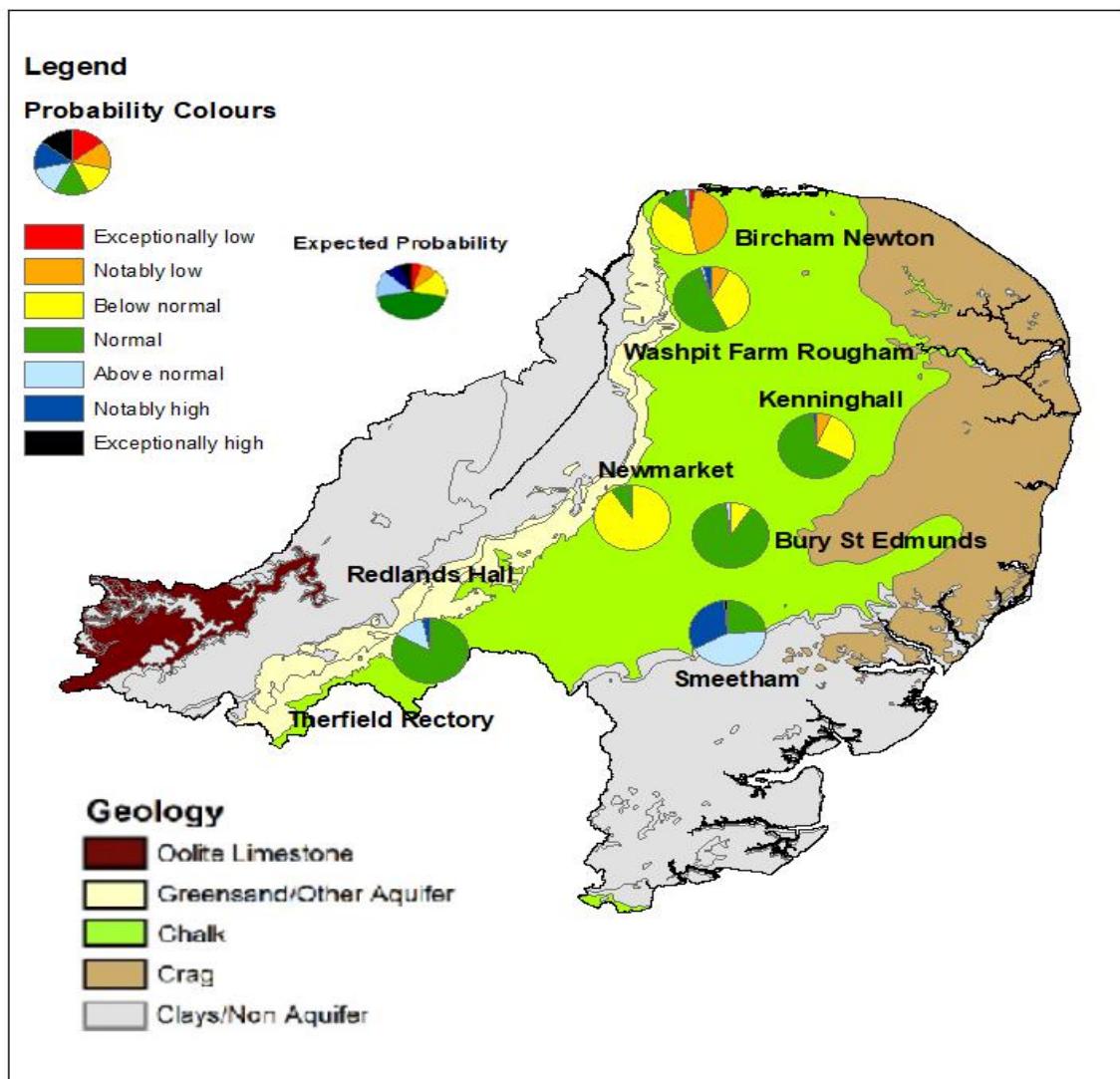
Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Environment Agency)
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7.4 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in September 2026

Table available in the appendices with detailed information. Exceptionally high or low levels are those which would typically occur 5% of the time within the historic record. Notably high or low levels are those which would typically occur 8% of the time. Above normal or below normal levels are those which would typically occur 15% of the time. Normal levels are those which would typically occur 44% of the time within the historic record.



Pie charts indicate probability, based on climatology, of the groundwater level at each site being, for example, exceptionally low for the time of year. (Source: Environment Agency)
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8 Glossary

8.1 Terminology

Aquifer

A geological formation able to store and transmit water.

Areal average rainfall

The estimated average depth of rainfall over a defined area. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Artesian

The condition where the groundwater level is above ground surface but is prevented from rising to this level by an overlying continuous low permeability layer, such as clay.

Artesian borehole

Borehole where the level of groundwater is above the top of the borehole and groundwater flows out of the borehole when unsealed.

Cumecs

Cubic metres per second ($m^{3s^{-1}}$).

Effective rainfall

The rainfall available to percolate into the soil or produce river flow. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Flood alert and flood warning

Three levels of warnings may be issued by the Environment Agency. Flood alerts indicate flooding is possible. Flood warnings indicate flooding is expected. Severe flood warnings indicate severe flooding.

Groundwater

The water found in an aquifer.

Long term average (LTA)

The arithmetic mean calculated from the historic record, usually based on the period 1991 to 2020. However, the period used may vary by parameter being reported on (see figure captions for details).

mAOD

Metres above ordnance datum (mean sea level at Newlyn Cornwall).

MORECS

Met Office Rainfall and Evaporation Calculation System. Met Office service providing real time calculation of evapotranspiration, soil moisture deficit and effective rainfall on a 40 by 40 km grid.

Naturalised flow

River flow with the impacts of artificial influences removed. Artificial influences may include abstractions, discharges, transfers, augmentation and impoundments.

NCIC

National Climate Information Centre. NCIC area monthly rainfall totals are derived using the Met Office 5 km gridded dataset, which uses rain gauge observations.

Recharge

The process of increasing the water stored in the saturated zone of an aquifer. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

Reservoir gross capacity

The total capacity of a reservoir.

Reservoir live capacity

The capacity of the reservoir that is normally usable for storage to meet established reservoir operating requirements. This excludes any capacity not available for use (for example, storage held back for emergency services, operating agreements or physical restrictions). May also be referred to as 'net' or 'deployable' capacity.

Soil moisture deficit (SMD)

The difference between the amount of water actually in the soil and the amount of water the soil can hold. Expressed in depth of water (mm).

8.2 Categories

Exceptionally high

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

Notably high

Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Above normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Normal

Value likely to fall within this band 44% of the time.

Below normal

Value likely to fall within this band 15% of the time.

Notably low

Value likely to fall within this band 8% of the time.

Exceptionally low

Value likely to fall within this band 5% of the time.

9 Appendices

9.1 Rainfall table

Hydrological area	Jan 2026 rainfall % of long term average 1991 to 2020	Jan 2026 band	Nov 2025 to January cumulative band	Aug 2025 to January cumulative band	Feb 2025 to January cumulative band
Broadland Rivers	141	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Below normal
Cam	139	Notably High	Notably high	Normal	Below normal
Central Area Fenland	148	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Normal	Below normal
East Suffolk	189	Exceptionally High	Notably high	Above normal	Normal
Little Ouse And Lark	150	Notably High	Notably high	Normal	Below normal
Lower Bedford Ouse	144	Above Normal	Exceptionally high	Normal	Below normal
North Essex	198	Exceptionally High	Notably high	Normal	Below normal
North Norfolk	129	Above Normal	Above normal	Normal	Notably low
Nw Norfolk And Wissey	142	Notably High	Notably high	Normal	Below normal
South Essex	178	Notably High	Normal	Normal	Notably low

Upper Bedford Ouse	162	Notably High	Exceptionally high	Above normal	Normal
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9.2 River flows table

Site name	River	Catchment	Jan 2026 band	Dec 2025 band
Abbey Heath	Little Ouse	Little Ouse	Normal	Below normal
Blunham	Ivel	Ivel	Normal	Normal
Bramford	Gipping	Gipping	Exceptionally low	Below normal
Burnham Overy	Burn	Burn	Below normal	Below normal
Burnt Mill	Rhee	Rhee	Normal	Normal
Cappenhamb	Tove	Tove	Above normal	Above normal
Colney	Yare	Yare	Normal	Normal
Denver	Ely Ouse	Cutoff and Renew Channel	Normal	Below normal
Dernford	Cam	Cam	Normal	Below normal
Heacham	Heacham	Heacham	Below normal	Notably low
Ingworth	Bure	Bure	Normal	Below normal
Lexden	Colne	Colne Essex	Notably high	Normal
Marham	Nar	Nar	Below normal	Below normal
Needham Weir Total	Waveney (lower)	Waveney	Normal	Normal

Northwold Total	Wissey	Wissey	Normal	Below normal
Offord (gross Flows)	Great Ouse	Ouse Beds	Normal	Normal
Roxton	Great Ouse	Ivel	Normal	Normal
Springfield	Chelmer	Chelmer Upper	Above normal	Normal
Swanton Morley Total	Wensum	Wensum	Normal	Normal
Temple	Lark	Lark	Normal	Normal
Willen	Ouzel	Ouzel	Normal	

9.3 Groundwater table

Site name	Aquifer	End of Jan 2026 band	End of Dec 2025 band
Biggleswade	Ivel Woburn Sands	Normal	Normal
Bircham Newton	North West Norfolk Chalk	Notably low	Notably low
Breckland	Wissey Chalk	Notably low	Notably low
Bury St Edmunds	Upper Lark Chalk	Above normal	Normal
Castle Farm, Offton	East Suffolk Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Gog Magog, Stapleford	Cam Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Hazlewood Common	East Suffolk Crag		
Hindolveston	Norfolk Chalk	Below normal	Notably low
Kenninghall	Little Ouse Chalk	Normal	Normal
Linton	Cam Chalk	Normal	Normal
Newmarket	Snail Chalk	Below normal	Normal
Old Primary School, South Creake	North Norfolk Chalk		Notably low

Redlands Hall, Ickleton	Cam Chalk	Below Normal	Normal
Rook Hall, Braiseworth	East Suffolk Chalk	Normal	Normal
Smeetham Hall Cottages, Bulmer	North Essex Chalk	Above normal	Normal
The Spinney, Costessey	Wensum Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Washpit Farm, Rougham	North West Norfolk Chalk	Below normal	Below normal
Therfield Rectory	Upper Lee Chalk	Normal	Above normal
Fringford P.s.	Upper Bedford Ouse Oolitic Limestone (great)	Notably high	Above normal

9.4 Ensemble projections tables

9.4.1 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in March 2026

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Bedford Ouse	Kym Ouse	Ivel Ouse	Ouse	Ely Ouse
Exceptionally low	3	0	0	0	11
Notably low	16	21	2	19	6
Below normal	24	8	24	24	19
Normal	40	39	52	37	50
Above normal	6	19	19	6	4
Notably high	10	13	0	13	6
Exceptionally high	0	0	3	0	6

9.4.2 Probabilistic ensemble projection of river flows at key sites in June 2026

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Bedford Ouse	Kym Ouse	Ivel Ouse	Ouse	Ely Ouse
Exceptionally low	3	0	0	0	6
Notably low	19	2	2	3	22
Below normal	10	6	10	10	28
Normal	52	85	58	68	39
Above normal	15	6	26	18	6
Notably high	0	0	3	0	0
Exceptionally high	2	0	2	2	0

9.4.3 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in March 2026

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Therfield Rectory	Newmarket	Washpit Farm	Bircham Newton	Kenninghall	Bury St Edmunds	Smeetham
Exceptionally low	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Notably low	0.0	4.6	0.0	75.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Below normal	0.0	93.8	9.2	24.6	96.9	0.0	0.0
Normal	91.8	1.5	89.2	0.0	3.1	23.1	58.5
Above normal	8.2	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	69.2	27.7
Notably high	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	10.8
Exceptionally high	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	3.1

9.4.4 Probabilistic ensemble projection of groundwater levels at key sites in September 2026

Percentage of pie chart for each band

Site	Therfield Rectory	Newmarket	Washpit Farm	Bircham Newton	Kenninghall	Bury St Edmunds	Smeetham
Exceptionally low	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Notably low	0.0	0.0	7.7	43.1	6.2	0.0	0.0
Below normal	0.0	90.8	35.4	40.0	26.2	9.2	0.0
Normal	83.6	9.2	52.3	12.3	66.2	89.2	24.6
Above normal	13.1	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	1.5	41.5
Notably high	3.3	0.0	3.1	0.0	1.5	0.0	32.3
Exceptionally high	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5