

Factsheet

PFAS and your drinking water



PFAS (pronounced ‘pee-fass’) is short for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances.

They’re a large family of man-made chemicals, made up of thousands of individual substances.

They’re sometimes called “forever chemicals” because they don’t break down easily in the environment.

PFAS have been used globally for many years in a wide range of products, including:

- Waterproof and stain-resistant clothing
- Non-stick cookware
- Food packaging
- Fire-fighting foams
- Some industrial and manufacturing processes

Because of their widespread use, small amounts of PFAS can be found in water, soil and the wider environment.

Are PFAS harmful?

Some PFAS can cause harm at high levels of exposure because they can build up in the body over time.

But it’s important to know:

- Not all PFAS have the same level of toxicity
- Toxicity data is not yet available for many PFAS
- A small number, such as PFOA and PFOS, have been linked to health effects in studies at sufficient exposure levels and are now restricted in many countries

It’s also important to know that drinking water is only one possible route of PFAS exposure.

Small amounts of PFAS can also come from food, household products and even household dust. Drinking water generally makes up a small proportion of overall exposure.

Get in touch

You can find more information on water quality by scanning the QR code or visiting anglianwater.co.uk/dwq or give us a call on **03457 145 145**.



Is my drinking water safe?

Yes. Your drinking water is safe to drink.

- Drinking water in England and Wales is among the best in the world
- All our supplies meet strict UK safety standards
- PFAS levels in our drinking water are below the wholesomeness limit of 0.1 micrograms per litre ($\mu\text{g/l}$) set by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

We use a risk-based water safety approach to identify and manage potential issues long before they could affect customers.

Does Anglian Water test for PFAS?

Yes. We carry out a risk-based PFAS monitoring programme, which is one of the largest in the UK.

- PFAS testing is carried out at water sources and treatment works, where it is most effective and we test for up to 48 PFAS compounds in both raw and treated water.
- It's not routinely sampled at customer taps, as regulation focuses on monitoring supplies at source
- All surface water and groundwater sites are individually assessed based on nearby activities that could pose a risk
- Sites with a higher risk are tested more frequently
- Risk assessments are reviewed annually using data from the previous five years

Our approach is in line with Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) guidance.

Where can I see water quality results for my area?

You can find a range of water quality results for your area on our website. It's important to know that this doesn't yet include PFAS results.



Visit anglianwater.co.uk or scan the QR code to go directly to our drinking water quality map.

What is Anglian Water doing about PFAS?

Even though PFAS levels are already within safe limits, we take a precautionary approach.

We:

- Monitor drinking water sources, rivers and streams across our region
- Share PFAS data with the Environment Agency to support action where needed
- Use treatment processes, such as activated carbon filtration, to remove PFAS
- Work closely with other water companies, regulators, academics and technology providers
- Invest in research to improve PFAS removal and explore destruction technologies

Between now and 2030, we're investing £74.8 million in additional treatment processes at some of our sites to further reduce any future risks.

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