

# Stronger, Greener, Healthier: Our plan for the North West

A regional summary of our Business Plan  
2025–30



Picture: Haweswater Reservoir, Cumbria

## Introduction

# Welcome to the regional summary of our Business Plan

**Louise Beardmore**  
Chief Executive



**The North West is an exciting and diverse region; it's where we live, work and play. We've built a plan for the next five years which has been shaped by, and adapted to meet, the diverse needs of the North West.**

We've been listening to customers and communities right across our region to understand what really matters. What's clear is that we need to improve services for customers and the environment. That's why we are proposing the largest investment in water and wastewater infrastructure in over 100 years, with over £13.7 billion planned between 2025 and 2030 to build a stronger, greener and healthier North West for everyone.

It's a hugely ambitious plan that will support 30,000 jobs across the region, and we've engaged with 95,000 people in Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire, to make sure we get it right, shaping our plans for each county to address the things that you've told us matter most. These include:

- Providing great quality water every time you turn on the tap
- Improving the region's natural environment and tackling storm overflows
- Doubling our financial support for those who need it, making sure nobody gets left behind
- Driving benefits for the North West's economy

We believe this regional approach to building the plan is unique. It's allowed us to consult and to listen to everyone's voice and secure record levels of customer support for the plan from homes, businesses and local government.

At the same time as improving services and investing in the security of infrastructure to respond to the challenges of climate change and population growth, we are also able to deliver real opportunities for the North West too, a chance to drive inward investment, provide great quality skilled jobs and ignite a regional economy.

It's a comprehensive plan – a plan that delivers on all our statutory obligations and on the things that matter most to regulators too.

“

**We are proposing the largest investment in water and wastewater infrastructure in over 100 years.”**

While we recognise that the plan necessitates an increase in bills, we also recognise the economic challenges facing our communities. That's why we're proposing an industry-leading support package of over £500 million, meaning that one in six customers will receive financial support so we reduce the risk of anyone being left behind by the costs of rising bills.

We are pushing ourselves to deliver better service while at the same time driving ourselves to realise greater levels of efficiency and we plan to finance all of this investment in the responsible and sustainable way that you expect from United Utilities,

Now, more than ever, we need to rise to the challenge, deliver improved services for our customers, the environment and our communities. It matters to customers, to regulators, to shareholders and it matters to us, and we are determined to deliver the step change we all want to see. We look forward to the opportunity of delivering this ambitious plan.



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[PR24.unitedutilities.com](https://PR24.unitedutilities.com)

## Highlights from our ambitious plan

### Great quality water every time you turn on the tap

- Improving water quality for 1.4 million customers
- Safeguarding water supplies for over 2 million customers
- Investing £975 million in a programme to build a more resilient network, fixing leaks and replacing 950 kilometres of old pipes and mains
- Improving resilience so we can halve the chance of having a hosepipe ban in the future

### Our largest ever environmental investment programme

- Improving the quality of our rivers by reducing storm overflow spills by 60% over the decade to 2030
- Protecting and enhancing over 500 kilometres of rivers and improving our bathing waters and shellfish beds
- Strengthening our network against increased rainfall to reduce flooding of homes and businesses
- Working with local authorities to separate rainwater from our systems so we build more resilient communities as we all respond to the impacts of climate change such as flooding

### Doubling our financial support for those who need it

- ... making sure nobody gets left behind
- Providing £525 million of affordability support for one in six customers who may be struggling to pay their bill
  - Installing 900,000 smart meters to help homes and businesses use less water and save money

### Driving benefits for the North West's economy

- Providing great quality skilled jobs, attracting much-needed and sustainable investment into the North West economy – we expect our plan would support 30,000 jobs across United Utilities and our supply chain

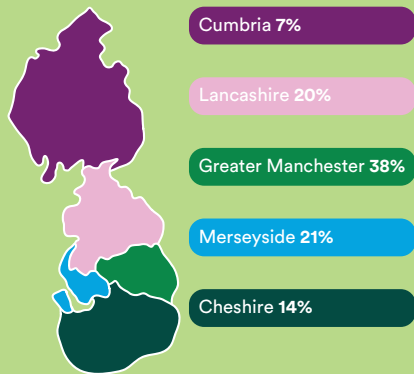
# The fantastic region we serve

The North West has a thriving culture built on a world-renowned legacy across food, literature, sport, music and entertainment.

Our region is diverse and has been shaped by multicultural communities. It's the birthplace of Kendal mint cake and scouse, classic literature like Peter Rabbit and Alice in Wonderland. It boasts numerous world-renowned sports teams. It's the region that brought the world The Beatles, Oasis and Harry Styles as well as the bright colours of Manchester Pride and bright lights of Blackpool Tower Ballroom and Media City. It is underpinned by a rich diversity – home to Europe's largest Chinese community and Britain's oldest African community. The North West is somewhere we are proud to call home.

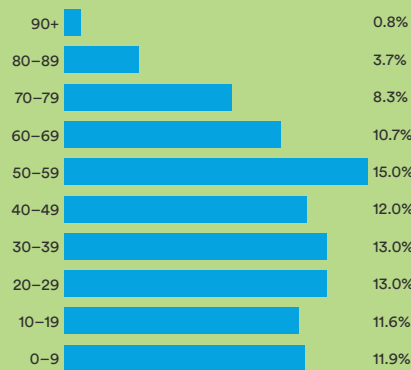
<p>Over 7 million people and 200,000 businesses – by 2050 we'll serve around 1 million more</p>	<p>The fourth smallest region by size, with the third largest population and home to 25% of England's dairy herds</p>	<p>Our communities are diverse and have different levels of prosperity and needs</p>	<p>Levelling up is a priority, and devolution is advanced with 2 city regions</p>	<p>12% of households are affected by water poverty, more than 50% higher than the national average</p>
<p>40% more urban rainfall than the industry average</p>	<p>New environmental requirements are driving unprecedented long-term investment</p>	<p>Over 90% of drinking water comes from surface water sources</p>	<p>A legacy of industrial heritage and heavy manufacturing based on Victorian infrastructure</p>	<p>A growing economy which contributes 10% of national GDP</p>

## Regional population distribution



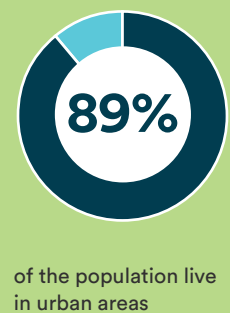
United Utilities customer data 2023

## North West population by age range



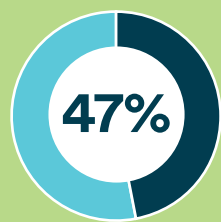
Plumplot data 2020

## Urban population



ONS 2021

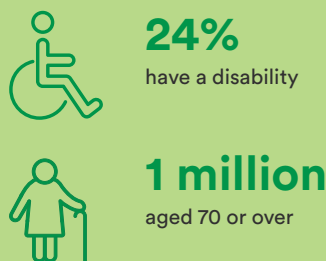
## Deprivation



Indices of Multiple Deprivation September 2019

Indices of Multiple Deprivation September 2019

## Identified vulnerability in the North West



Age statistics from Census 2021. Disability statistics from House of Commons library research July 2022

## Ethnicity



Census 2021



## Providing great water for a **stronger**, **greener** and **healthier** North West

### STRONGER

We deliver an essential service, help customers in vulnerable situations, invest in local communities, and support jobs and the economy, giving the North West resilience in a changing world.

We protect and enhance urban and rural environments, and adapt to the challenges of climate change, allowing people, wildlife and nature to thrive, making the North West a better place to live now and for the future.

### GREENER

We provide great quality water that people love to drink, safely remove and recycle used water, while taking care of beautiful landscapes in the North West every day.

### HEALTHIER

# How our plan provides a stronger, greener and healthier North West

## STRONGER

We deliver an essential service, help customers in vulnerable situations, invest in local communities, and support jobs and the economy, giving the North West resilience in a changing world.



Helping people with their bills – doubling our support to

**£525m**



**590,000**

customers helped by our financial support schemes



Investing in our region, enabling growth by upgrading

**950km**

of water mains



**22m**

additional litres of water to ensure a reliable supply of water



**13%**

reduction in interruptions to your water supply



Reducing leakage by

**13%**



**50%**

reduction in the likelihood of a hosepipe ban



Helping homes and businesses save

**9m**

litres of water



Creating

**7,000**

new high quality skilled jobs



# How our plan provides a stronger, greener and healthier North West

## GREENER

We protect and enhance urban and rural environments, and adapt to the challenges of climate change, allowing people, wildlife and nature to thrive, making the North West a better place to live now and for the future.



Investing

**£3.1bn**

to reduce spills from over 400 overflows



Protecting and enhancing over

**500km**

of rivers, spending over £900m to reduce nutrients



Investing around

**£660m**

to improve bathing and shellfish waters



**25%**

reduction in the number of pollution incidents



Improving over

**11,500**

hectares of land to enhance biodiversity and water quality



Spending £196m to reduce carbon emissions by

**43%**

(against 2020 baseline)



# How our plan provides a stronger, greener and healthier North West

## HEALTHIER

We provide great quality water that people love to drink, safely remove and recycle used water, while taking care of beautiful landscapes in the North West every day.



Delivering a

**32%**

reduction in sewer flooding in homes and businesses



Replacing lead pipes at

**30,000**

homes



**26%**

reduction in water quality contacts



Upgrading

**65km**

of the Vyrnwy Aqueduct, improving water quality for over 500,000 people



Enhancing safety at

**25**

reservoirs for people to enjoy their visit



Improving bathing waters for recreation





# Where your money goes

By 2030, to provide you with a supply of clean, fresh water and to take all your used water and sewage away, it will cost you an average of £1.52 per day.

But where does your money go?

## Running our service

Costs associated with running and maintaining all of our assets, such as 43,000km of water pipes and 79,000km of sewers



## Building new infrastructure

Costs associated with building and financing our investment programme to build new treatment facilities and tackle storm overflows



## People and materials

To support 6,000 hardworking colleagues deliver services all day, every day



## Paying our fair share

Our payment of taxes and licences, and providing for a return on investment



## Performance incentives

Several items, including a reward mechanism if we exceed our performance targets



The numbers presented above are before inflation.



## Further information

We've been working with stakeholders and customers to develop our understanding of unique needs across the North West's five counties. This means we can develop plans that are more relatable to the communities we serve.



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## Thank you . . .

We believe this plan reflects the priorities that customers and stakeholders have told us matter most to them. We are most grateful to the thousands of people, in either a personal or professional capacity, who have given their time to provide us with their views and insight on the delivery of water and wastewater services across North West England.

Listening to you isn't something we do just for our business plan – it's something we do all of the time. We have devoted a chapter of our business plan to explain how we gather your perspectives and opinions and we welcome ideas on how we can do this more effectively.

In November 2023, we are holding 'Your water, your say' sessions in each county to provide more details about our plan, in interactive meetings where the Chief Executive and her team will take questions from customers and stakeholders. Details can be found at [unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/listening-to-our-customers/your-water-your-say](https://unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/listening-to-our-customers/your-water-your-say)

The water industry's economic regulator, Ofwat, will now examine our proposals and feed back to us in the middle of 2024, a process which is called a draft determination. This is an assessment of our business plan and offers a view on whether the plan meets regulatory requirements.



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**Water for the North West**