



# Protecting drinking water quality and safeguarding public health policy



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Policy no. POL002

## Purpose

The Risk Committee has approved this policy to set the principles for protecting drinking water quality and safeguarding public health thereby reducing risks to the provision of a safe water supply that maintains customer confidence.

Implementation of the policy and supporting standards will help mitigate the principal risk of “we fail to supply enough wholesome water to meet demand” of which breaches may involve a public health incident, financial penalty, enforcement action and/or reputational damage.

This policy was approved on 11 September 2024 by the Risk Committee.

## Scope

This policy/standard applies to all Thames Water employees<sup>1</sup>, and where applicable those partners<sup>2</sup> that undertake work activity on our behalf, who are involved in the supply of drinking water.

## Key principles – describing our approach

We commit to protecting public health while carrying out our supply activities and to providing the best value for our customers. To achieve this we will:

- Comply with drinking water quality regulatory requirements and internal standards.
- Aspire to be, and be recognised as, the industry leader for our approach to protecting drinking water quality and safeguarding public health.
- Embed a quality management system to assure compliance with all our public health standards.
- Document operational practices and responsibilities and review them regularly in accordance with our quality management system.

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<sup>1</sup> An ‘employee’ is anyone who is employed directly by Thames Water on a permanent or fixed term contract.

<sup>2</sup> A ‘partner’ refers to third parties or contractors working on behalf of Thames Water.

- Maintain a risk-based approach for the effective management of our drinking water supply assets and use this knowledge to drive effective investment strategies.
- Identify and manage any public health risks, from catchment to consumer, by employing a risk-based drinking water safety plan approach, which delivers timely mitigation of risks.
- Work in partnership with all stakeholders including regulators, health agencies and our customers, seeking advice from qualified external experts where required.
- Motivate, support and train employees, and partners where applicable, to be both competent and confident to carry out assigned work; we will monitor this through regular audit and assessment.
- Provide training in drinking water quality and public health protection matters to our Executive Team and, where appropriate, to members of the Thames Water Board.
- Empower all employees, and partners where applicable, to act to protect public health where a water supply risk exists.
- Use available resources to manage the resilience of our assets and minimise single points of failure and vulnerability.
- Participate in relevant discussions and research to influence the development of industry regulations, guidelines, best practice and other standards relevant to public health.
- Respond and manage incidents in a timely manner and in accordance with our established incident protocols, to resolve any public health issues.
- Continuously improve our approach to public health protection by utilising internal and independent external audits, as well as practice exercises and adopting incident learning.

## Responsibilities

All employees, and partners where applicable, involved in the supply of drinking water and public health protection are responsible for ensuring their actions are consistent with this policy.

Managers in relevant positions are responsible for communicating the details of this policy to employees, and partners where applicable, and promoting a compliant working environment to maintain our approach to water quality and public health protection.

## Sharing our progress

We regularly report to our Board on our performance and share our plans and progress made within our Annual Report & Accounts, Sustainability Report and our Annual Performance Report.

## Useful references

- Asset management policy
- Environmental policy
- Water Industry Act
- Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations

## Contacting us

For questions, comments or feedback relating to this policy or if you have any concerns or issues relating to our protecting drinking water quality and safeguarding public health performance or management arrangements, you can contact us through:

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/contact-us>

For concerns regarding dishonest or unethical behaviour, please contact us on any of the following:



Employees of Thames Water, or partners where applicable, can also report concerns to their Line Manager.

You can also raise your concern or issue to independent organisations, such as contacting a Regulator (e.g. Ofwat, DWI, EA) or whistleblowing charity (e.g. Crimestoppers). You are not required to submit a disclosure to us before contacting an independent organisation.