



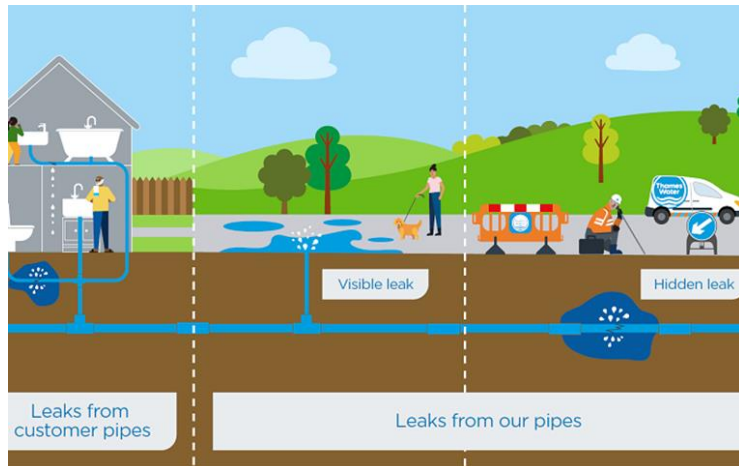
It's everyone's water

Our Leakage Performance



Reducing Leakage

Reducing leakage is an important part of protecting our water supply for the future. It is essential that we continue to deliver life's essential service so our customers, communities and the environment can thrive.



What is Leakage?

- Leakage is lost water – that's all the water not making its way to our customers. Much of this water leaks from ageing pipes or pipes that have been damaged on our network. Water is also lost on our customers' pipes and through unmeasured consumption (46% of billed customers are unmeasured with 17% of individual customers having smart meters).
- We measure leakage in megalitres, or millions of litres, per day (Ml/d). One megalitre is equal to around 12,500 baths, or 40% of an Olympic size swimming pool.

What causes Leaks?

- Old or weak pipes.
- Natural wear and tear on pipes.
- Sudden heavy traffic causing ground movement.
- Temperature changes, which cause pipes to swell and shrink.
- High pressure or sudden changes in pressure.
- Weather – particular very hot or cold conditions.

Types of Leaks

- Over 95% of leaks are never seen by our customers. They're often small, underground, and hard to find. Visible leaks – the ones that do reach the surface – are larger, but they don't normally lose as much water. Our field teams work day and night to find as many leaks as possible. We also use artificial intelligence to help us find and fix large leaks faster. Our customers help too. They often [report leaks to us](#) and we start to fix them soon after they appear.
- Customer leaks aren't on our network, and it is the customers responsibility to fix these. You can read our step-by-step guide on [fixing a leak at your property](#).

You can read about [our wider plans to look after water.](#)



How do we fix leaks?

Here's our process

Locate

We'll find a leak, or it'll be reported to us (Report a leak).



Assess

One of our leakage teams will check what needs to be done to fix the leak and how urgent it is. We prioritise repairs based on the amount of water being lost, the effect on customers' water supply, the complexity, and the location.



Plan

We'll always plan the repair as quickly as possible, and in a way that seeks to minimise disruption to our customers. We'll also send letters to customers near the site, so they know what's going on. However, it's not just us who are involved in the process, and it can take time to plan the logistics.

We may need to work with the council or with other utilities. Sometimes we need to do the repair at night. Closing roads at night helps us to avoid disrupting traffic and water supplies during the day.

Repair

Once the plan is in place, we'll send a repair team to fix the leak. This might involve turning off the water or redirecting water around other pipes. Sometimes the repair teams need to dig down to the pipe by hand to be safe, particularly if it's in a tricky position and surrounded by other utility pipes like gas mains. When the pipe has been fixed, we resurface the road which can take time to set safely.

Leakage

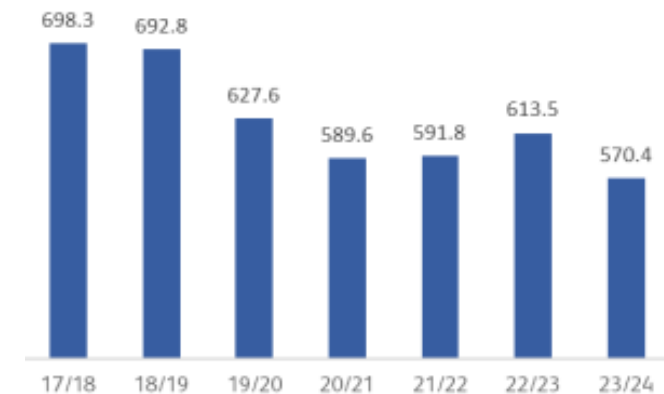
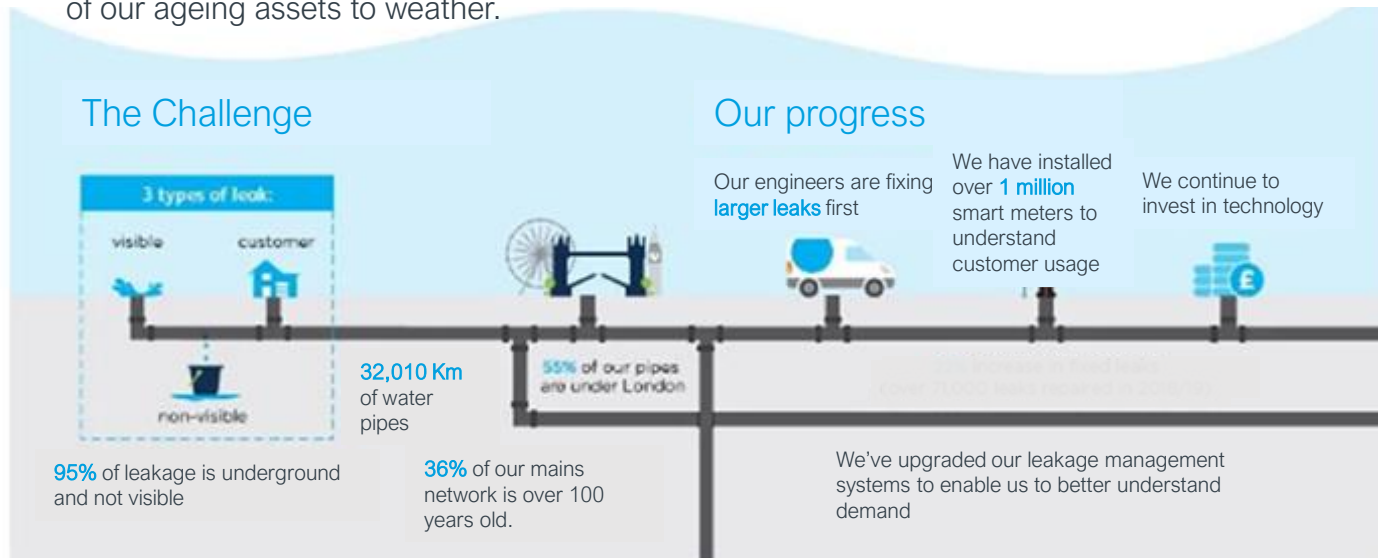
Facts and Stats

How we've done

- Our 2023/24 annual leakage position of 570.4 MI/d is a 7% reduction on our 2022/23 performance. This year-on-year reduction of 43MI/d means that leakage is at its lowest ever level on our network.
- Despite this we missed our regulatory target in 2023/24 delivering a 12% reduction as assessed on a three-year rolling average basis (compared to a target of 17.4%).
- We know we have more to do, and we've changed our strategy to prioritise leaks losing the most water first rather than maximising the number of repairs.
- Extremes of hot or cold weather have a big impact on levels of leakage highlighting the sensitivity of our ageing assets to weather.



- This year we have incorporated some improvements in our leakage reporting making our reporting more accurate and more in line with Ofwat guidance. The graph below shows our rebased annual leakage numbers since 2017/18 and the reduction in annual leakage over time.



What are we doing to reduce leakage further?

We have an ambitious target to reduce leakage by 23% over the next three years and 50% by 2050.

Our Leakage transformation programme

The Leakage Transformation programme has laid the foundations for the initiatives within our Turnaround plan. So far, we've:

- Changed how we 'Find and Fix' leaks. We've moved away from focusing on the number of leaks to finding and repairing the biggest leaks. We grade leaks on the volume of water lost helping us to focus on repairing larger leaks more quickly.
- Installed **1 million smart meters** across our region and will continue to install even more. With the information we get from these meters we get more insight into demand and consumption.
- Launched **new ways of working** across all front-line operational teams, improving performance monitoring at a local level.
- Made our **data more robust** so that we can visualise all sources and systems we use to manage data in one application.



Innovation

- To support our ongoing commitment to reduce leakage we have been looking at new ways to repair and detect leaks.
- To help us with customer side leakage we have been testing the **AquaPea** solution, a self-sealing compound for customer pipes that eliminates the need for an excavation. This was granted water quality approval and made available to use enabling over 80 repairs a month with no impact on water quality.

PALM – The focus of our Turnaround Plan

- **Prevent** - is the proactive work we do every day to improve our network like mains replacement & pressure management. In 2023/24 £238 million was invested in our water network to reduce leakage and improve our trunk main network.
- **Aware** - is all about understanding our data.
- **Locate** - is how we target leaks.
- **Mend** - is fixing our leaks in line with Service Level Agreements which are based on the expected size of the leak.



Reducing leakage

How can you help?

- You can help us find leaks and save water. If you spot a leak, please let us know through our [view and report a problem page](#) on our website.
- You can also prevent leaks in your home by [being 'water smart'](#).
- You can also read our guide on [fixing a leak at your property](#). If you need help with plumbing work, we have a range of WaterSafe approved plumbers available.
- We've also put together some [Water saving](#) tips to save water.
- Please [get in touch](#) to share your feedback on the content of this report or to discuss how we may be able to make this report more accessible for you.





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