

Kent State of the Environment Report: Water Quality Update

Last Updated: July 2020

Next update: Winter 2020

*This data is published by the Sustainable Business and Communities Team of Kent County Council
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In Kent, the water quality of rivers, lakes and groundwater is primarily impacted by; chemical and nutrient pollution from sewage treatment work, agriculture, transport and industry; the negative effects of invasive species; river water levels and flows; and physical modifications to the water body. The health of Kent's waterways is determined by the results of both the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Bathing Water Directive (BWD).

In Kent, 66% of waters have been heavily modified or designated as artificial. These waters are managed and protected under the WFD, which is governed by the European Union, who have stated that all members must reach a "good ecological water body status" by 2027 at the latest.

Key facts

Water Bodies

As of 2016, 11 of Kent's water bodies met a "good" ecological status, however this needs to reach 28 (out of 124) by 2021.

The main reasons water bodies are not achieving good status are:

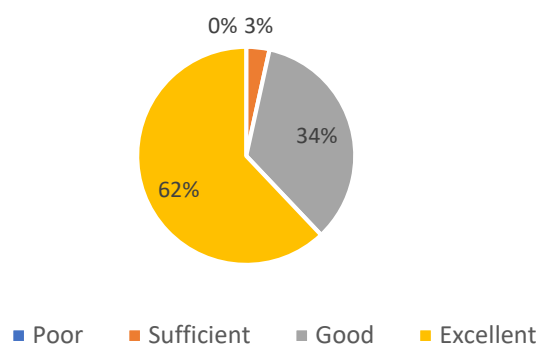
- Physical modifications
- Pollution from wastewater
- Pollution from rural areas

Bathing Water

The EU's new BWD Classification System was introduced in 2015 with a tough set of water quality targets that determine how good the local water is for the bathing.

Of the 29 sites being monitored in Kent, 18 bathing areas have been classified as "Excellent" since 2019, and as of 2017 Kent no longer has any sites classified as "Poor". However, the national average for "Excellent" status is 67.1%, compared to Kent's 62%, so there are still improvements to be made.

Status of Bathing Water Classifications 2019



Data sources

Bathing Water Classification Results <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/0bc550c2-21c7-45c9-bf50-af37791527fd/bathing-water-quality>

Update to the river basin management plans in England – National Evidence and Data Report https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514944/National_evidence_and_data_report.pdf

Kent Water for Sustainable Growth Study https://www.medway.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2374/kent_water_for_sustainable_growth_2017.pdf

Blue Flag Awards <http://www.blueflag.global/>

Ecological Status of Water Bodies – Catchment Data Downloader <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/data-download/#>