

DROUGHT ADVICE FOR PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

A private water supply is any water supply which is not provided by a water company. The source of the supply may be a well, borehole, spring, stream, river, lake or pond.

Groundwater levels are fed by rainfall. Groundwater levels usually increase during winter and reduce through the summer. It can take some time for groundwater levels to increase in response to rain as water has to wet up the soil and then travel through the ground and into the spaces between rocks further underground. When there is a lack of rainfall over a long period, groundwater levels can become exceptionally low and there may be impacts on private water supplies such as spring sources drying up.

Be aware that as water levels lower, water may be drawn into the supply from greater distances, this may affect your drinking water quality. Make sure treatment is serviced in line with the manufacturer's instructions. If you are concerned about the quality of the water, use bottled water for drinking and contact the Private Water Supply Team to arrange for a sample to be taken.,

Actions that can be taken:

- regularly monitor the water levels in your well or borehole or check spring flows
- create a water insufficiency plan (template available on Shropshire Council website)
- Use water efficiently- for example, take showers instead of baths, turn taps off when brushing teeth, re-use bath water, consider a hose pipe ban
- Ensure your pump is positioned below the water level. Your pump can be damaged if it is trying to pump in a dry well or borehole. Consider lowering your pump if possible. Please seek advice from your water engineer.

If water levels are very low take action to seek an alternative supply of water.

Sourcing an alternate water supply:

- Speak to neighbours to find out if they can supply you if your source of water dries up. Make sure the water is distributed safely
- Find out if there is a mains water supply nearby that you could connect to.
- Find companies that supply water bowsers suitable for drinking water. You must ensure that the temporary water supply is wholesome by specifying best practice (e.g., BS 8551)
- Contact your local water company for advice.
 - Please note water companies and the local authority have no legal obligation to supply you with an alternate supply.
- The Drinking Water Inspectorate has further information about regulations surrounding alternative water supplies in emergencies.

Contact Information:

- Shropshire Council- 0345 678 9000
- Private Water Supply Team- 0345 678 9067 (option 6) pws@shropshire.gov.uk
- Severn Trent Water (Public health and standards team)- 02477715667
- Drinking water Inspectorate - 0300 068 6400 dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk