

# What we do

“We’re proud to help life flow smoothly in the North West.”



## Where we operate

From Crewe to Carlisle, our offices and water and wastewater treatment works span the North West of England.

We gather our water from a range of different sources, but predominantly from our reservoirs in the Pennines and the Lake District. We extract water from Lake Vyrnwy in Wales for customers in Merseyside and Cheshire, while the rest is taken from the River Dee, boreholes and streams.

Of the 1,700 million litres we supply every day, well over half is from Cumbria and Wales. The two biggest reservoirs are Thirlmere and Haweswater in Cumbria. Haweswater holds more than 84,800 million litres of water – equivalent to around 33,900 Olympic swimming pools.

We own and manage over 56,000 hectares of land, making us the largest corporate landowner in England.

Much of this is catchment land (the areas immediately surrounding our reservoirs). We recognise that quality control starts right at the point of collection, so we keep our catchment land as clean and sustainable as we can. This helps with the water quality for our customers and makes a huge difference to the environment.

We help to protect over 400km of coastline and around 7,000km of rivers flowing across our region.

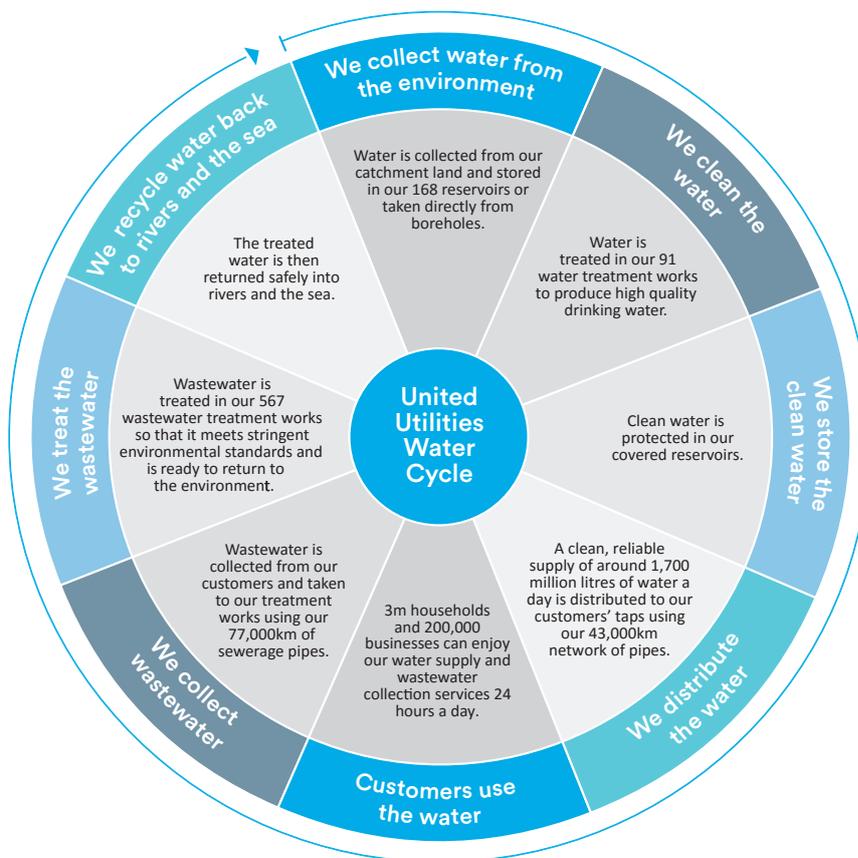
## Our water cycle

The collection, treatment, use and return of water to the environment is naturally a cyclical process.

We collect water from the environment, which we clean and store before distributing it to our customers for their use.

We then collect it as wastewater and treat it before returning clean water back to the environment.

The stages of this water cycle and our involvement in each of these can be seen in the chart to the right.



## Our industry and market

Every day, over 50 million household and non-household customers in England and Wales receive water and wastewater services. These customers are served by 10 licensed companies which are split regionally based on river catchment areas.

United Utilities Water Limited holds licences to provide water and wastewater services to a population of approximately 7 million people in the North West of England.

We provide services to approximately 3 million households, and this generates around two-thirds of our total revenue. We also serve approximately 200,000 businesses, ranging in size from large manufacturing companies to small shops.

We, along with the other nine water and wastewater companies, comprise the vast majority of the total water and wastewater sector, as depicted on the pie chart to the left.

The remainder is made up of licensed companies which provide water-only services and tend to be smaller in size.

As each company in the water sector operates as a regional monopoly for the majority of its services, they are subject to regulation in terms of both price and performance.

The privatisation of the industry, 28 years ago, has been widely perceived as a success, making a significant contribution to public health as a result of over £100 billion investment in maintaining and improving assets and services since 1989.

It has led to improvements in the quality of services, higher environmental standards, and superior quality drinking water, at lower estimated costs to customers, than if the water sector was still owned by the UK Government.

In order to protect the interests of customers and the environment, at privatisation, three separate bodies were set up to regulate the activities of water and wastewater companies under the areas of economic, drinking water quality, and environmental regulation. This has evolved to fit with the tightening of laws and regulations over time.

 Read more about our [Political and regulatory environment](#) on pages 20 and 21

## Industry constitution

We are the second largest of the 10 licensed water and wastewater companies, based on the size of our asset base, as measured by Regulatory Capital Value (RCV).

