

EA 2025

CREATING A
BETTER PLACE



EA 2025

CREATING A BETTER PLACE

We are the Environment Agency.

We create better places for people, wildlife and the environment.

We put the climate emergency at the heart of everything we do and help society adapt to environmental challenges such as flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal change.

We improve and protect the quality of our air, land and water by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations and believe a healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to sustainable and resilient economic growth.

We know we cannot do this alone.


We work together with local, national and global partners.

This includes Defra group (the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), wider government, businesses, local councils, charities, civil society groups, local communities and international bodies.

We strive to make the right decisions today, for the people, wildlife and environment of tomorrow.



**Environment
Agency**

An aerial photograph of a coastal town and harbor at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the landscape. The harbor is filled with numerous boats, and the surrounding land is a mix of green fields and buildings. In the distance, wind turbines are visible on a hillside. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with wispy clouds.

This plan will act as our compass. It will guide us forward towards a healthier, greener and more prosperous future.

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CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOREWORD

Speaking on the 30 June 2020, the Prime Minister said: “we will build, build, build: build back better, build back greener, build back faster.”

The need for speed is in part driven by economic urgency following the coronavirus pandemic in the first half of 2020, but the Government is clear that Project Speed is in response to a wider group of national and global trends, not least nature loss and climate change.

The climate emergency is often misunderstood as being all about new challenges, but in the main it exacerbates and multiplies threats the Environment Agency has been dealing with following its inception in 1996. Today, we must move faster to stay ahead.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change set climate action against the clock with its landmark 1.5 degree report and since then we have acted with deliberate pace to improve the country’s preparations for rising seas, wetter winters and drier summers. We are helping the whole UK economy find the way to net zero by 2050, by getting the Environment Agency to net zero by 2030.

Climate change underlines the importance of making places more resilient to storms and extreme heat. Through our regulation of the waste, water, nuclear and carbon intensive industries (as well as protecting fish in lakes and rivers) we are helping the UK to be stronger and more competitive in a rapidly changing world. Sustainable development and equal access to green space for the wellbeing of all communities are also essential.

This Action Plan sets out how we will build on our past achievements to accelerate to a fair, green and just recovery. With the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and forthcoming Environment Bill as our maps, this plan will act as our compass, allowing the Environment Agency and our partners to chart a course towards a healthier, greener and more prosperous country in 2025.

The technical, political and financial lessons we learn along the way will benefit people now, and develop the UK’s workforce for the risks and opportunities of the coming decades.

That may seem like a lot to put on the shoulders of the Environment Agency’s people, but we

know they are more than up for the challenge. Our thanks go to them for their continued dedication and public service.



Emma Howard Boyd
Chair



Sir James Bevan
Chief Executive

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OUR PRIORITIES TO 2025

The next five years are crucial.

We need to take bold and transformative action to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it while supporting a sustainable, fair and healthy recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

We know it won't be easy.

The global health emergency has shocked the world, placing extra pressure on lives, livelihoods and the economy.

But it can also help us better understand the largest public health threat of the century, the climate emergency, which we put at the heart of everything we do.

This plan, EA2025, translates our vision for the future into action.

We will protect and enhance the environment as a whole and contribute to sustainable development. Through this we will

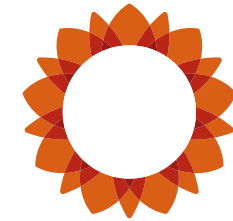
contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and help protect the nation's security in the face of emergencies.

The plan sets out 3 long term goals:

- A nation resilient to climate change
- Healthy air, land and water
- Green growth and a sustainable future

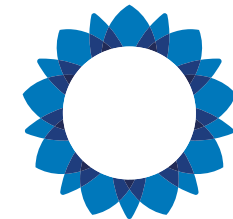
These goals will drive everything we do today, tomorrow and to 2025. They champion sustainable development, support our work to create better places and challenge us to tackle the climate emergency and deliver a green economic recovery for everyone.

Achieving them will require us to work and think differently. We will need to unlock ideas, innovation and ingenuity in all areas of our business, and to think creatively to secure the funding and investment to deliver them.



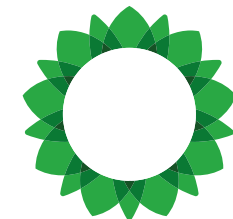
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A NATION RESILIENT
TO CLIMATE CHANGE



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HEALTHY AIR,
LAND AND WATER



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GREEN GROWTH AND
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



***Our goals will drive
everything we do today,
tomorrow and to 2025.***

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A NATION RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Setting the scene

Climate change is happening now.

It will drive higher rainfall in shorter periods, faster coastal change, longer droughts and more frequent heatwaves.

Population growth and increasing demands for energy, land and water will compound the impacts on wildlife and the environment. People will feel the health impacts of a changing climate through changes in temperature, disease and pollution.

To become a nation more resilient to a changing climate we need to take action now. This means we need to embrace the uncertainties around the likely impacts and adopt flexible approaches to building resilience.

Our thinking has to change faster than the climate. We recognise our current ways of working have been developed through events experienced in the past - rather than the challenges we will face in the future.

Climate disasters already cost the global economy an estimated \$520 billion a year. Building resilience to extreme climate events makes economic sense and helps protect people, wildlife and the environment.¹

Data and evidence are crucial to understanding how we respond. With the Met Office, we are guardians of much of the environmental scientific evidence in the UK. We use this to describe climate risks, the state of the country's environmental assets and to engage and inspire people to take action. We will strive to be at the forefront of the change society needs, providing stronger environmental leadership.

We will be open, honest and humble in our conversations as we play our part in building our country's preparedness for climate change.

What we want to achieve by 2025

The work we have done and continue to do has delivered progress towards climate resilient places. But we must do more to inspire those around us and help the country prosper through the inevitable changes to come. Tackling the climate emergency must become a default part of everyone's thinking.

We will work to influence businesses, citizens and communities to increase their resilience by helping them to adapt to future climate risks. This means being prepared for incidents when they happen and helping businesses better understand the financial



risks caused by climate change and nature loss. Investment in climate resilience will strengthen the economy and lead to a more sustainable and equitable society.

Today we reach an estimated 1 in 10 of the country's population through our digital platforms and our data is downloaded around 200 million times a year. We want this to grow significantly over the next five years. To do this, we will take advantage of the digital revolution to create new and innovative services for partners and communities.

The consequences of flooding can be devastating to people's mental health and local economies. The economic losses from the winter 2019/20 flooding are estimated to be around £333 million.

Working in partnership and using our influence we will support the design or adaptation of places, buildings and infrastructure to be resilient to both flood and drought risk. We will continue our work with

communities so they are ready to act, respond and recover quickly from incidents. We will influence businesses to invest in improving their resilience so they can take greater account of the financial risks from climate change and nature loss.

We need to improve the way we assess climate risks and opportunities in every decision we take. For example, seeking to better prepare for a 2°C warming in global temperatures as well as planning for higher scenarios, such as a 4°C rise.

We will seek to ensure healthy, long-term water supplies and help communities recover quickly after extreme weather events by repairing damage, restoring the economy and supporting people's health and wellbeing. Our philosophy is that we should do more than just survive a changing climate; our aspiration is to help the country thrive in it.

Our 5 Year Aims

1. By 2025 we will have created more climate resilient places and infrastructure, by ensuring the nation is prepared for flooding, coastal change and drought
2. By 2025 we will be a stronger leader on climate adaptation and resilience, encouraging others to act now on the climate emergency and invest in adaptation
3. By 2025 we will be ready for bigger, more frequent incidents and will support those at risk to be more resilient



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HEALTHY AIR, LAND AND WATER

Setting the scene

Unless we act now the state and condition of our natural resources will continue to decline and the ecological crisis will deepen.

Failing to act is not an option. Clean air, land and water are critical for our health, sustain wildlife and provide essential services that support our lifestyles and economy. They provide the natural capital on which we all depend.

A variety of air pollutants have known or suspected harmful effects on human health and the environment.²

Many of our water bodies are in a fragile state. Intensive agriculture and urban land-use often pollutes waterways and threatens valuable wetlands, peatland and biodiversity. Climate change will exacerbate these pressures.

Over half of the UK's food is grown domestically, but intensive agriculture is

depleting the health of many of our soils. In the long term this could be catastrophic for food production and release large carbon stores held in the ground.

By 2050, we may experience significant water shortages unless action is taken to reduce demand and increase supply.³

UK soils currently lock up around 10 billion tonnes of carbon, roughly equal to 80 years of the UK's current annual greenhouse gas emissions.

There is a proven relationship between environmental quality and human health and wellbeing. Even low levels of air pollution can lead to health issues. New risks may be emerging from micro-plastics and chemicals introduced into the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. There is also strong evidence that our health and wellbeing can be enhanced with access to green space and nature.

A large review of studies found a statistically significant link between spending time in green places and reductions in heart disease, type 2 diabetes and overall mortality rates.⁴

Not only do we want everyone to have improved access to the natural environment, wherever they live, we want to leave it in a better state for future generations. This means more than just reducing negative impacts and slowing down the rate of decline. It means improving all elements of environmental quality everywhere, for everyone.



What we want to achieve by 2025

There have been notable successes in improving the quality of air, land and water in recent decades but to achieve our goals we must do more. Our work as a modern regulator and as an environmental leader is designed to protect biodiversity and enhance the environment and the places where people live, work and play. Strong, proportionate and risk based regulation works.

Through it we will seek to improve the quality of our air, land and water by tackling pollution. Regulation not only protects the environment but encourages and safeguards greater investment into the economy. It drives innovation and resource efficiency and creates new markets. When incidents do happen we will strive to minimise serious and lasting damage to the environment.

We will continue to work with wider government, partners and businesses to design new systems for agriculture, land management and the food and drink sector.

The new Environmental Land Management scheme will help us tackle environmental challenges and pay for public goods.

We will support innovation while continuing to protect people and improve the environment, giving businesses the confidence to develop and grow. We will manage the water resources that we and the natural environment rely on, and which contribute to better public health and an improved environment.

We will restore habitats and biodiversity and use our influence to ensure that urban planning is done in a way which meets the challenge of food production and supplying water for a growing population.

We need to work even more effectively with businesses to improve, not just sustain, their environmental performance; and to enhance, not just protect, the environment around us. By working with nature and our partners we will aim to promote and realise opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and economic prosperity.

Our 5 Year Aims

4. By 2025 air will be cleaner and healthier

5. By 2025 rivers, lakes, groundwater and coasts will have better water quality and will be better places for people and wildlife

6. By 2025 nature and land will be better protected and enhanced



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GREEN GROWTH AND A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Setting the scene

In 25 years' time, the UK population will have grown by over 5 million and more people will live in urban areas.

A growing population and smaller family units will mean the number of households is forecast to increase by 23%, putting more pressure on the production and consumption of resources.

Since the 1970s the world has been using the Earth's natural resources faster than they can regenerate. This has to change.⁵

England is committed to building up to 300,000 new homes a year. These will need to be supported by new infrastructure and jobs to create prosperous places and tackle inequality.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals recognise the interdependence between growth and the environment. We support this

view. A healthy economy drives investment in the environment, and a healthy environment drives our economy.

The speed of scientific and technological innovation is unprecedented across many parts of the economy. Developments in areas like artificial intelligence, robotics, materials science, resource efficiency and energy storage offer potential solutions to decouple economic growth from resource use.

At the same time the climate will have changed and will continue to change. But this is not just about climate change – it's about valuing and respecting the environment in which we live and the natural resources on which we have always depended.

Our local presence across England, our national voice and our international scientific knowledge base makes us a key partner to help achieve sustainable growth locally and nationally.

What we want to achieve by 2025

As the economy fluctuates over the next five years we will challenge the idea that a choice must be made between economic growth and a high quality environment – both are achievable and interdependent. We will do this by delivering sustainable projects, protecting and restoring nature, improving lives and contributing towards green job creation. By aiding a green recovery we can stimulate a recovery in nature.

We will strengthen our capability and capacity to work in partnership and influence long term policy. We will work to attract more funding into the right places so growth does not exceed environmental capacity, and has better links with long term prosperity and resilience to future economic shocks. As an advisor, we want to be a partner of choice working with decision makers and investors towards the strategic design and planning of communities to deliver environmental net gain and enable people to live healthy, fulfilling lives, while protecting the nation's natural capital. Integrating quality green space into future design will be essential to redressing inequalities between communities.

Funding is the foundation of everything we do. Without it, we can't deliver for people or the environment. We need to secure both the income and investment needed to achieve our ambition and encourage others to invest in climate resilience.

We need to adopt innovative and commercial approaches so that we can achieve more with our funding and investment. We want to make it as easy as possible for businesses to make investments that support both green growth and drive resilience and sustainability.

In order to reach net zero by 2050, growth will have to take place in the context of using less energy, decarbonising electricity and other fuels, electrifying most forms of transport and achieving deep reductions in agricultural emissions.⁶

We will work with government and partners in the finance and public sectors to develop green finance approaches to fund environmental projects. We will continue to join forces with other authorities, charities and companies

to incorporate environmental thinking into their projects while identifying environmental improvements that others can fund and deliver too.

We want human health and wellbeing to improve through growth that is clean, connects people to nature and provides opportunities for recreation. That is why we will continue to fight organised waste crime, which damages nature and costs the UK economy more than £600 million every year.

We are making a renewed and stretching commitment to sustainability. We will reduce our carbon emissions in line with the Paris Agreement, reduce our consumption of resources and waste, deliver more for people and communities and leave the natural environment in a better state than we inherited it. By setting ourselves the goal of achieving net zero carbon in our operations and supply chains by 2030 we will support the expansion of the circular economy.

We will use our voice, our evidence and our action to promote the environment and secure sustainable approaches and a long term shift in behaviours that will mean a stronger, prosperous future for everyone.

Our 5 Year Aims

7. By 2025 we will achieve cleaner, greener growth by supporting businesses and communities to make good choices, through our roles as a regulator, adviser and operator

8. By 2025 we will have cut waste crime and helped develop a circular economy

9. By 2025 we will be on track to deliver our sustainable business commitments, including to be net zero by 2030





Our new action plan will only succeed if we sustain and strengthen our culture.



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OUR CULTURE

Our culture is our strongest asset. It defines how we behave personally and collectively when at work.

It makes us who we are: an organisation committed to protecting people, the natural environment, water, soils, air and wildlife with local, national and global partners.

Our new action plan will only succeed if we sustain and strengthen our culture which is summarised in the following statements:

- Yes, if: we will take this approach in all that we do
- Think big, act early, be visible
- Seek partnership, show leadership
- Focus on outcomes not processes
- Embrace difference, include everyone
- One team: support and trust each other to do the right thing
- Stay safe and grow: invest in the wellbeing and development of all

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OUR VALUES - MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

Strategy is about choice.

We will continue to be guided by three principles in choosing what we do:

- **Put people and wildlife first: our goal is to create a better place for them.**
- **80/20: we will focus on the 20% that makes 80% of the difference.**
- **Support local priorities: every place and community has its own needs.**

We will need to continue to strengthen the partnerships we currently have and continue to foster new ones. This will build broader collaborative arrangements that join critical agendas across the economy, health and the environment together.

Whilst we recognise the strength of our people, culture and values, we know we need to continually transform and adapt to respond to the climate emergency.

We will continue to refine our ways of working to ensure value for money in everything we do to maximise the impact we can have for our customers and the communities we serve.

We will aim to be better leaders and act as exemplars to bring about and support societal change.





*We want our people
to make a lasting
difference to society.*

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OUR PEOPLE

Our commitment

We believe it is possible to create a working environment that presents challenge and growth while helping people be themselves at work and live healthy, balanced, purposeful lives.

We want to enable our people to work flexibly and remotely and to support their wider responsibilities through every stage of their life and career. When things do go wrong, we are fully committed to offering assistance and providing access to professional advice.

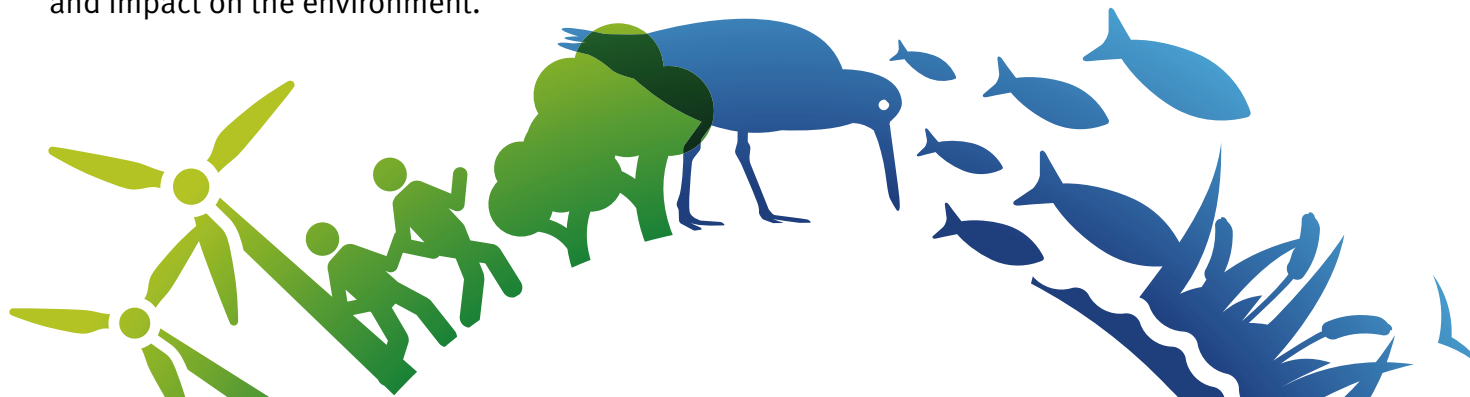
We will continue to adapt ensuring the lessons and opportunities arising from the Coronavirus pandemic shape our future. This will mean greater flexibility in our working practices, better use of technology, better work life balance and lower carbon emissions and impact on the environment.

We have invested heavily over a number of years to ensure that people can work safely and have the best training and equipment to keep them from harm, even in challenging working environments.

Today many of our people tell us that working for the Environment Agency is highly rewarding as they directly contribute to the wider wellbeing of our nation.

They value the range of different roles open to them in the course of experiencing a rewarding career. They want to create a better place.

Our commitment to our people has to be matched by their personal commitment to everyone they work with and to living the values and culture that sustain the whole organisation.



Life enhancing

Over the next five years we want to do even better and make working at the Environment Agency a life enhancing experience.

We want to become a leading employer, empowering our people to take the right decisions and opportunities to make a lasting difference to society.

We are proud of who we are.

We are consistently ranked highly in the Stonewall Workplace Index for LGBT+ inclusion and have achieved the MIND Gold Award for the last four years consecutively. Our Pension Fund is world leading as it directly addresses the impacts of climate change and decarbonises through its investment decisions.

But we are also honest. For working here to be truly life enhancing for everyone, we can and will do even better.

Whilst we will work to maintain the progress we have made, over the next five years we want to see the diversity of our people change significantly to more closely reflect the communities we serve. We want everyone to be valued for who they are, realise their full potential and have a voice in our decision-making. We want to be inclusive and respectful in all we do.

We will continue to need people who understand the urgency of climate change and have the knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm to tackle it. This will include accredited responders to emergencies and people able to contribute to an innovative, commercial, and confident culture that supports new ways to attract funding and investment to meet our long term environmental goals.

If we bring this all together, not only will we make work a life enhancing experience we will create better places for people, wildlife and the environment.





We want everyone to be valued for who they are, realise their full potential and have a voice in our decision-making.

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HOW WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCEEDING

This plan will evolve throughout its lifetime, particularly in the way we measure our performance and achieve our 5 year aims. This will allow us to be flexible to the continually changing context in which we operate and be responsive to future challenges and opportunities.

Goal	5 Year Aims	2020/21 Metric and Out-turn target
A nation resilient to climate change	1. By 2025 we will have created more climate resilient places and infrastructure, by ensuring the nation is prepared for flooding, coastal change and drought	We reduce the risk of flooding for more households - 300,000 homes better protected by March 2021 We maintain our flood and coastal risk management assets at or above the target condition - 98% of high risk EA maintained assets at target condition
	2. By 2025 we will be a stronger leader on climate adaptation and resilience, encouraging others to act now on the climate emergency and invest in adaptation	A minimum of 90% of adaptation actions are delivered and on track in our FCERM Strategy and Adaptation Report
	3. By 2025 we will be ready for bigger, more frequent incidents and will support those at risk to be more resilient	We have a first class incident response capability - 6,000 staff who are trained and ready to respond to incidents



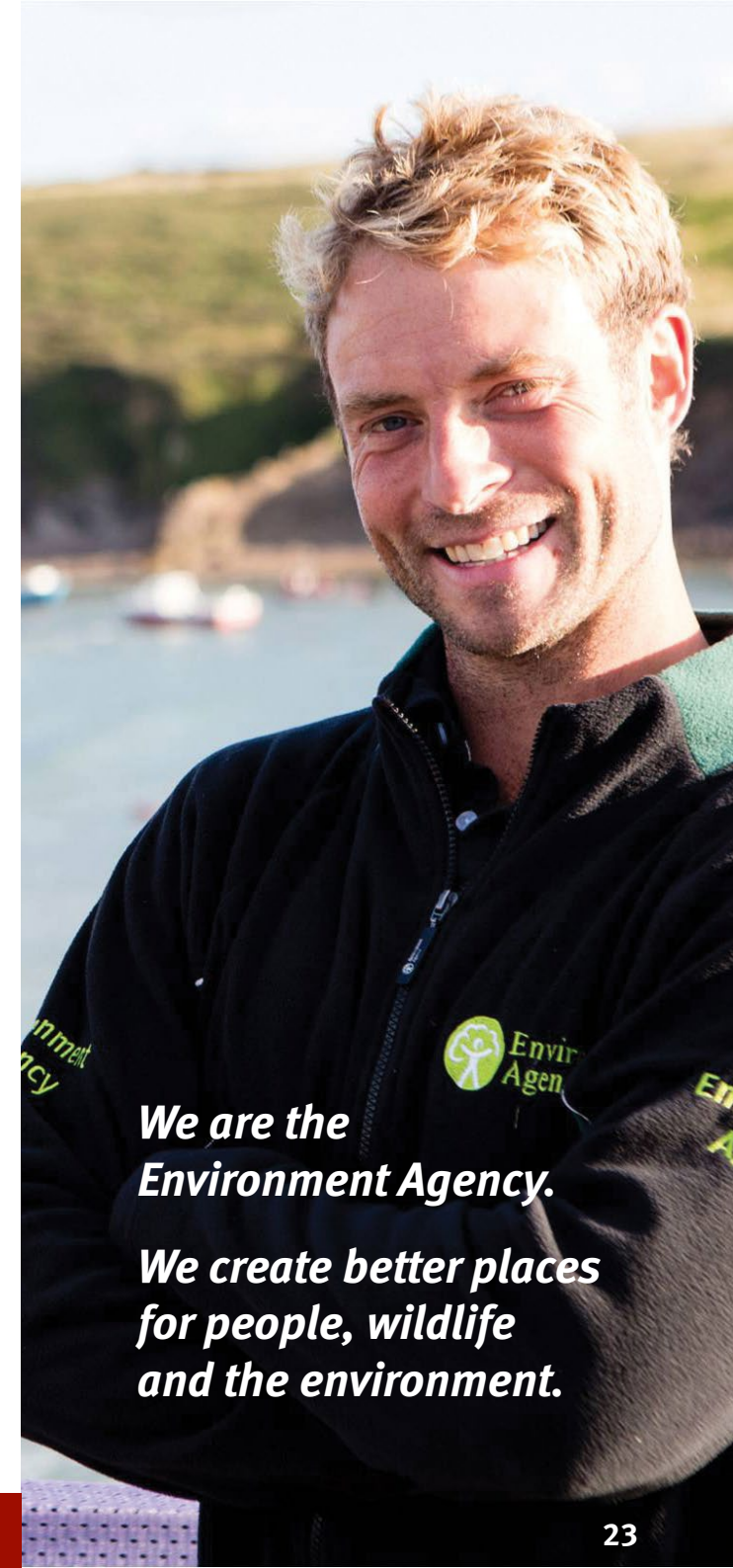
Goal	5 Year Aims	2020/21 Metric and Out-turn target
Healthy air, land and water	4. By 2025 air will be cleaner and healthier	<p>Air quality is improving - Monitor the reductions across 5 priority pollutants: NOX, SOX, NMVOC, NH3 and Particulates in the refineries sector. This measure will cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target of oxides of sulphur emissions = 90% of 2017 baseline (479 g/t) = 431 grams/tonne • Target of oxides of nitrogen (grams/tonne) = 90% of 2017 baseline (225 g/t) = 203 grams/tonne of oil processed <p>Available progress updates on other priority pollutants (eg. reports on PM2.5 and refinery audits) to be covered in insight report</p>
	5. By 2025 rivers, lakes, groundwater and coasts will have better water quality and will be better places for people and wildlife	<p>Our rivers and coasts have better water quality and are better places for wildlife. Measure: kilometres of the water environment enhanced - 8,000km cumulative from 2016 by the end of 2020/21 and achieve 3,900km in 2020/21</p>
	6. By 2025 nature and land is better protected and enhanced	<p>We increase biodiversity and promote an environmental net gain by creating more and better habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife - 1,200 hectares total (restoration and creation of habitat)</p>



Goal	5 Year Aims	2020/21 Metric and Out-turn target
Green growth and a sustainable future	7. By 2025 we will achieve cleaner, greener growth by supporting businesses and communities to make good choices, through our roles as a regulator, adviser and operator	We successfully influence planning decisions by local planning authorities. Target: 97% of decisions taken in line with our advice
	8. By 2025 we will have cut waste crime and helped develop a circular economy	We reduce the number of high risk illegal waste sites - The target will be a ceiling of 216 - representing a 7.5% reduction from 19/20 out-turn, of 233 sites.
	9. By 2025 we will be on track to deliver our sustainable business commitments, including to be net zero by 2030	A carbon net zero organisation by 2030 - 28,720 tonnes: 8% reduction on 19/20 outturn – 2% per quarter



	5 Year Aims	2020/21 Metric and Outturn target
Enabling Aims	We manage our money efficiently to deliver our outcomes	Achieve 100% spend to budget
	The proportion of our staff who are from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background	14% of workforce (cumulative)
	The proportion of our executive managers who are female	50% of executive manager workforce
	We have the lowest possible lost time incident (LTI) frequency rate	Achieve a lost time incident frequency rate of 0.11 per 100,000 hours worked or better.



We are the Environment Agency.

We create better places for people, wildlife and the environment.

An accessible version of this document is available at
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-ea2025-creating-a-better-place>

Endnotes

- 1 Hallegatte, Stephane; Vogt-Schilb, Adrien; Bangalore, Mook; Rozenberg, Julie. 2017. Unbreakable : Building the Resilience of the Poor in the Face of Natural Disasters. Climate Change and Development;. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25335> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.”
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- 3 HR Wallingford. (2015). CCRA2: Updated projections for water availability for the UK: Final report. Wallingford: HR Wallingford. www.theccc.org.uk/publication/climate-change-risk-assessment-ii-updated-projections-for-water-availability-for-the-uk/ (viewed on 21 November 2018).
- 4 Twohig Bennet and Jones. (2018). The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes. Environmental research 166: 628-637 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2018.06.030> (Accessed 25/10/19) Health statement page 8: Kovats, S (eds.). (2015). Health Climate Change Impacts Summary Report Card, Living With Environmental Change.
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- 6 Net Zero – The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming, Climate Change Committee.
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