

East Kent groundwater flooding update

What is groundwater flooding?

Flooding from groundwater can happen when the level of water within the rock or soil underground (known as the water table) rises. When the water table rises and reaches ground level, water starts to seep through to the surface and flooding can happen.

Groundwater may rise up through floors or underground rooms such as cellars or basements. It can also add to flows in rivers and streams and cause those watercourses to flood. Groundwater flooding is much slower to occur than river flooding – it will usually happen days, weeks or even months after heavy or prolonged rainfall. It may last weeks or even months.



What is the current status?

The Nailbourne is a winterbourne; a stream that only flows after prolonged wet weather. It is fed by groundwater and remains dry most of the time. Due to wetter than average weather since December, the Nailbourne has been flowing since mid-January. As the groundwater continues to rise, flooding of low lying land, gardens, roads and basements/cellars is now possible. Some road closures at fords are in place.

A Groundwater Flood Alert has been issued in East Kent and for the Nailbourne and Little Stour to inform local communities.

The Nailbourne flowing on the edge of the Elham Valley

What is the outlook?

We publish the most up to date information on the current conditions and how we expect the conditions to develop online at www.gov.uk/government/publications/kent-groundwater-situation

What is the Environment Agency doing?

Local authorities are responsible for managing the risk of groundwater flooding. We are supporting them by:

- Continually monitoring groundwater levels via key borehole sites and river flows and updating our Groundwater Flood Alert as necessary
- Operating the Flood Relief Channel at Littlebourne to reduce the risk of flooding to properties
- Working closely with local authorities and other partners to ensure they are informed and prepared
- Our field teams are working in the area 7 days a week. They are inspecting flood defences across the area, clearing river blockages and ensuring that, wherever possible, rivers and streams are flowing freely





Mill Lane ford flood barrier; we are operating the Little Stour relief channel to allow flows to bypass villages; our field teams are removing blockages like this fallen tree, from the Nailbourne.

What is the impact on the sewer network?

One of the impacts of elevated groundwater levels is increased infiltration into surface and foul water sewers. This increases the volume of effluent in sewer networks and can cause them to overflow. We understand this is a very distressing experience for the residents impacted and we are working with Southern Water as a priority to ensure the best outcomes for local communities and the environment. Please report overflowing sewers via our Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60.

What can I do?

- **CHECK** your flood risk and **SIGN UP** to our free Flood Warning Service on 0345 988 1188 or via www.gov.uk/sign-up-to-flood-warnings
- **REPORT** flooding or other incidents via our Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60
- **REVIEW** your individual and community group flood plans
- **CHECK** pumps and any other flood protection equipment you have
- **CLEAR** drains and gullies around your property so they are free from debris
- **MOVE** valuables from basements and cellars

Further information

You can follow @EnvAgencySE on Twitter to keep up to date with our work. You can find practical advice on what to do before, during and after groundwater flooding at the [Environment Agency .GOV.UK](http://EnvironmentAgency.GOV.UK) webpages.

We will send a further update when there is a change to flood risk status in this area.

