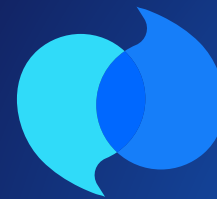


Impact Report 2025



**Future Water
Association**
Informing, Innovating, Influencing

Foreword from Chairman, Mark Smith



The UK water sector remains at a pivotal juncture. Environmental pressures are intensifying, public expectations are shifting fast, and the pace of technological and regulatory change continues to accelerate. In this landscape, leadership and collaboration aren't optional extras - they're the foundations of a sector that can adapt, improve, and earn trust. Future Water Association exists to help make that possible: a platform where innovation is supported, challenge is welcomed, and progress is built through connection.

As Chairman, I continue to see the commitment, candour, and drive of our members, partners, and team. This Impact Report is not just a recap of what we've done. It is a reflection of how, together, we are influencing the direction of the water sector - by insisting on joined-up thinking, real evidence, and the confidence to tackle what's uncomfortable as well as what's working.

In 2025, the principle of "Having the Honest Conversation" remained central to our approach. It matters more than ever. Real transformation demands that we look squarely at performance, capability, resilience, and public confidence - not defensively, but constructively. Future Water has continued to create and protect the spaces where those conversations can happen with integrity: across supply chains, utilities, regulators, policymakers, and emerging leaders.

But honesty alone is not enough. The year ahead requires determined action. AMP8 investment, rapid digital progress, workforce sustainability, and customer trust must move from shared ambitions to measurable outcomes. We must not simply respond to external pressure - we must help shape the sector's future on our own terms, with innovation and long-term resilience at the core.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to our progress this year. Your engagement strengthens our collective voice and expands our ability to convene, challenge, and influence. Particular thanks go to the Future Water team, whose energy and professionalism ensure we continue to punch above our weight and deliver impact well beyond our size.

As we look ahead through 2025 and into the next stages of sector reform, I encourage every stakeholder - new and longstanding - to stay close to this community, to speak openly, to challenge wisely, and to help drive the change we know is both necessary and achievable. Future Water Association's role as a catalyst and connector will only become more critical.

Together, we can realise a sector that is resilient, sustainable, future-ready, and trusted by society.

Introduction from CEO, Paul Horton



Future Water Association exists for one reason: to help transform the UK water sector. That mission is as urgent now as it has ever been. The challenges facing the sector are complex and interconnected – ageing assets, climate volatility, tighter environmental expectations, new regulatory demands, and rising pressure on customer outcomes. These aren't issues any single organisation can solve in isolation. They require shared leadership, collective learning, and a willingness to rethink what “good” looks like.

One of the clearest risks to long-term sector resilience is still workforce sustainability. Too many experienced professionals are leaving, too few are entering, and the pace of change is creating a skills gap that will only widen without concerted action. Meanwhile, severe weather events, competing water demands, and continued public scrutiny

are testing the sector's ability to respond quickly and transparently. Our job is to make sure the honest conversation leads to lasting capability – not just short-term fixes.

This Impact Report sets out the tangible progress we've made over the past year. By tracking our work against our purpose, we combine qualitative insight and measurable outputs to show what has shifted, where we've added value, and where gaps remain. We see this report not as an endpoint, but as part of an open, ongoing journey: a way of being clear about progress, upfront about challenges, and practical about the priorities that will shape our next steps.

Transformation requires evidence, continuous review, and a culture that makes space for difficult truths. That is why we remain committed to transparency, accountability, and improvement – across everything we convene, publish, and influence.

This year's report also showcases the extraordinary work of our team. Small in number, but relentless in impact, they continue to go beyond what is expected to support members and partners and to move the sector forward. None of this progress happens without the time, trust, and ambition that our members and collaborators bring. The Future Water community is the engine of our impact – and the reason we can keep pushing the sector toward the future it needs.

We are proud of what has been achieved in 2025, and even more focused on what comes next. If we keep having the honest conversation – and act on it – we can build a water sector that is more resilient, more innovative, and more trusted by the society it serves.

Number
of members

12%

increase in
member companies

850

individuals
engaged

At a Glance - our year in numbers

Marketing reach

6,100

LinkedIn
followers

400,000

social channel
impressions 

8,000 

email subscribers with
40-70% open rate

Event attendees

1,200+

people attended
50+ events and
working group meetings
over the year.

Who Are Our Members, and Why Do They Join?

Industry	%
Engineering	27%
Manufacturing	11%
IT, Data and Security	11%
Construction	11%
Utilities	8%
Network Rehabilitation	7%
Environmental Services	5%
Metering	4%
Building Materials	4%
Consulting	4%
Professional Training & Coaching	3%
Health and Safety	1%
Maintenance	1%
PR & Communications	1%
Instrumentation and Monitoring	1%



Member impact

Stronger routes into water companies

Through our *Water Company Liaison Meetings*, members are gaining more direct access to utilities and a clearer feedback loop into client priorities. In 2025 we engaged with **6+ utilities**, and member feedback on these sessions has been consistently strong, reinforcing their value as a trusted bridge between supply chain and client needs. This work remains ongoing, with further utilities being approached to widen reach in 2026 as a response to member feedback.

Listening and responding to members

Our Online Member Survey provided structured evidence on satisfaction, value, and focus areas.

A **12% response rate (up from 10% in 2024)** gave a base for service improvements and for shaping this year's impact reporting. We will build on this in 2026, aiming for **15%+ response rate** to strengthen representativeness and tracking over time.

Three benefits came through consistently as the core drivers of membership impact:

1. Networking and relationship-building

Comments highlight the practical benefit of meeting peers across the sector, hearing different perspectives, and making connections that support business growth.

2. Working groups and shared learning

Members describe these as spaces for shared knowledge, peer learning, and credible sector insight. FWA is seen as a convener of expertise and a channel for collective progress.

3. Events that are genuinely useful

Members value both the range and cadence of events, and the fact that the format makes it easy to find something relevant.

Member impact (continued)

Why events land so well

Events are one of the clearest sources of membership value.

Attendees rated their usefulness **4.6/5**, aligning with wider year-round feedback (**4.4/5 across 100+ post-event responses**). Members don't see events as "nice to have"; they see them as practical opportunities that support real sector and business outcomes.

Members value events mainly because:

- **They bring the right people together** – suppliers, partners, and water-company contacts who are hard to access elsewhere.
- **The content is actionable** – grounded in what matters for AMP8 and beyond, from delivery pressures and asset resilience to innovation and emerging risks.

The combination of credible insight and meaningful connection is what makes events feel worth the time and cost.



Working Groups

Fostering Global Innovation Through the Water Dragons Competition

- 4 international heats in 2025 with companies from Canada and the UK.
- Partnership with the Canadian High Commission boosted UK-Canada innovation exchange.
- Impact: One company secured contracts with 2 UK utilities post-competition, showcasing real-world adoption.

Advancing Regulatory Understanding with the Standards & Regulations Group

- The UK Water Industry Guidance Note created in conjunction with Water UK is now available for public consultation with a view to be adopted and shared early 2026.
- Aims to simplify complex standards, helping UK and global companies comply and operate efficiently.
- Identified the need for specialist training in standards; new programmes are in development to enhance sector compliance.

Creating a Collaborative Platform for New Professionals

- Engages professionals within their **first 5 years**, focusing on collaboration and sector challenges.
- **Key focus:** Addressing the skills gap via **knowledge sharing, education, and diverse hiring practices.**

Outputs:

- **Encouraging industry events to allow for early entry professionals:** Industry events being approached to become more accessible for those early in their career to allow for their voices to be heard, diversity of the audience and allow additional training.

Elevating Leakage and Metering knowledge and action

- Hosted dedicated Water Dragons heats on leakage and metering, promoting:
 - New solutions for detection and prevention.
 - Innovative approaches to metering and consumer engagement.
 - Finalist advancement for broader sector exposure.
- Launched a specialised Metering Group to advance smart metering and network optimisation.

Safeguarding the Future: Digital Infrastructure and Cyber Security in Focus

- Led by Gordon Robinson, providing bi-monthly threat intelligence on cyber risks specific to the water sector.

Focus areas:

- Digital infrastructure upgrades and staying ahead of cyber threats.
- Best practices for IT-OT resilience, aligning with NIS2 regulations.
- Advocates for sector-wide involvement in cyber resilience as digitalisation accelerates with other sector groups such as Tech UK Water Group.
- Impact: Raised awareness, equipped members with actionable insights, and set strategic priorities for a secure future.

UK Water Sector Impact

2.0 Report Card

Sector-wide insight and accountability

We are developing *Report Card 2.0* as a shared “state of the industry” view for the water sector. Deliver is underway, with publication forecast for April 2026 following collecting feedback from over 150+ industry professionals from across the supply chain, regulators and government bodies.



Reducing duplication and strengthening collaboration across trade bodies

FWA has been building formal links with peer organisations through MOUs for reciprocal membership and joint promotion. This work is expanding sector networks, sharing learning, and reducing siloed activity. Further associations are being approached to extend this collaboration in 2026.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We have contributed to a *country-wide EDI framework*, involving a wide cross-section of sector stakeholders. The focus is on raising senior-level understanding and exploring mechanisms such as CPD-linked webinars to drive sustained engagement.

Future Water Association supported collective action and recognition in October 2025 for Black History Month, bringing together professionals from across the sector, led by numerous water companies and supply chain actors for a series of 5 educational and network expanding webinars. A platform was provided for apprentices and graduates at one of the webinars to share their experiences in the water sector to young people looking at careers in the water sector.

Group outputs and industry tools

Standards Industry Guidance Note (IGN)

Through our Standards & Regulations workstream, an Industry Guidance note has been developed to support new product development and entry to the UK water market. Impact will be tracked through downloads and launch engagement.

Building a Societal License (in collaboration with Copper Consultancy)

What was it?

Public expectations of the water sector have evolved rapidly, with growing scrutiny over water quality, infrastructure investment, and customer service. This report explores the tension between regulatory constraints and customer demands, as well as the broader need for public trust in the sector.

What is the impact?

- **Three-part webinar series** engaging industry leaders, policymakers, the supply chain and water utilities in critical discussions.
- **Informed Future Water Association's advocacy efforts**, supporting calls for enhanced public understanding of the water sector.

Government Impact

Independent Water Commission input (completed)

FWA convened member feedback sessions in response to the Commission's call for evidence and submitted consolidated recommendations. Our input aligned strongly with the Commission's eventual findings, and we hosted a well-attended member webinar led by Paul Horton to share outcomes. Follow-up with the wider sector on the recommendations is the next step.

Influencing policy through member voice (ongoing)

We continue to generate policy recommendations on consultations agreed with our Board, ensuring member priorities are heard by bodies including **DEFRA, EA, DWI** and **DBT**. Impact will be tracked through evidence of recommendations being adopted in consultation outcomes.

National water skills leadership

In recognition of FWA's role on capability issues, **CEO Paul Horton has been invited to join the DEFRA Water Skills Group**, established in 2025. This places FWA directly inside national skills planning and reinforces our commitment to addressing a key member-identified priority.

Event Highlights

Events are more than just gatherings— they are dynamic platforms for connection, collaboration, and influence across the water sector.

They serve as critical touchpoints where the supply chain meets utilities, regulators, government bodies, and other key stakeholders. By fostering direct engagement, events enable open dialogue, knowledge exchange, and mutual understanding, driving forward innovation and shared progress.

For both small enterprises and large organisations, events offer a valuable voice—providing equal opportunities to showcase expertise, raise concerns, and present solutions. They break down silos, encourage cross-sector partnerships, and help shape a more integrated, resilient, and responsive water industry.

Oversubscribed Water Company Liaison Meetings

We facilitated exclusive, high-demand liaison meetings connecting our members with major UK water companies, including Wessex Water, Northumbrian Water, and Yorkshire Water etc. These sessions provided a unique opportunity for suppliers and contractors to engage directly with utility decision-makers, discuss operational needs, and align on future priorities.

Networks November

During November we hosted 8 events focussing on our water networks. The topics discussed ranged from nature based solutions, digital and cyber resilience, emerging talent, procurement through innovation, standards and regulations, and Water Dragons.

Awards Recognition

Ten exceptional contributors were honoured at our awards evening at our prestigious annual reception at the Canadian High Commission. This awards evening celebrated excellence, leadership, and innovation, reinforcing the value of individual and organisational impact across the industry.



Sector Representation

Our CEO, Paul Horton, has played a central role in amplifying the association's influence and the voice of our members by actively participating in key industry events throughout the year.

- National and global visibility through UKSTT, Global Leakage Summit, and Digitising the UK Water Sector.
- Policy influence via DEFRA (Water efficiency meetings; Skills Strategy Group), APPG Water, DBT Health Tech Review, and coordination of the Independent Water Commission submission.
- Convening recognised through chairing the Water Infrastructure Forum and participation in sustainability and data-centre resilience events.



Representing, chairing, leading and championing

Our operations manager, Hannah Spencer has been representing the association's members' views through chairing panels at Innovation Zero and the Sustainability Delivery Summit, leading national conversations on AMP8 infrastructure delivery challenges and championing water-sector careers as "green jobs" to help address the industry-wide skills gap.

Hannah also represented Future Water Association at the Environmental Infrastructure Commission water working group.



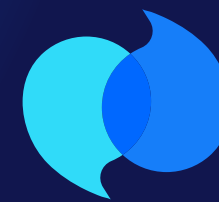
Looking Ahead

The journey of transformation is ongoing.
As we step into the next phase of AMP8, our focus remains on:

- Strengthening workforce retention and skills development.
- Driving innovation through collaborative research.
- Enhancing industry standards to ensure resilience and sustainability.
- Deepening engagement with regulators, policymakers, and the wider public.

The challenges are significant, but so are the opportunities. Through honesty, collaboration, and action, we will continue to drive the change needed to secure the future of the UK water sector.





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Association**
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Future Water Association
The Incuhive Space
Grigg Lane
Brockenhurst
SO42 7RE

Tel: +44 (0) 333 014 4498
admin@futurewaterassociation.com
www.futurewaterassociation.com