The Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

3 February 2026

Dear Emma

Recent water outages across Kent and Sussex

The recent outage of water across Kent and Sussex highlighted how vulnerable our water supply is in the South East.

Many elderly or vulnerable people - who should get bottled water deliveries to their doors - were left without water. Others were given the wrong information about supplies. Businesses were left without support, schools had to close and the emergency water supply for livestock was grossly negligent.

People were either given no information or misleading information preventing them from making contingency plans. The terrible communications made a bad situation even worse, and this was not the first time this has happened.

Last July, South East Water left thousands of people in East Kent without water for up to eight days. I raised the same concerns about the company's emergency response then and in the months following. Frustratingly nothing seems to have improved.

That is why we have been calling for the Chief Executive of South East Water to be removed. There is no public confidence that he can turn this around and there must be accountability.

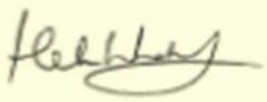
We would like to meet with you to discuss what steps you will take to prevent future water outages in Kent and to ensure that should this happen, there is a much more effective emergency response.

We are concerned that if this were to happen again in summer, or for a longer period of time, without an improved emergency response we could see deaths of vulnerable people and also of livestock. As it was, a calf died of dehydration near Tonbridge.

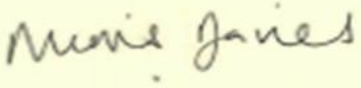
There also needs to be better planning to provide more support for businesses and ensure schools are not forced to close. We would also ask that compensation for businesses be further enhanced as repeated water outages not only affect revenues, they also have ongoing costs with increased insurance premiums.

We look forward to hearing from you.

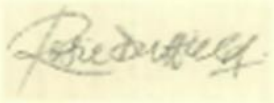
Yours sincerely



Helen Whately MP



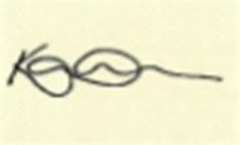
Mims Davies MP



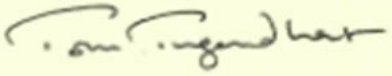
Rosie Duffield MP



Helen Grant MP



Katie Lam MP



The Rt Hon Tom Tugendhat MP