



HEALTHCARE SECTOR

Water Resilience Guide



For hospitals, clinics, and care facilities, water resilience is about safeguarding patient care, controlling costs, and protecting reputation.

In healthcare, water isn't just a utility, it's a critical resource for hygiene, sterilisation, and patient comfort. Any disruption can directly affect safety and service delivery. This guide will help you understand your water footprint, identify risks, and implement strategies to ensure your facility remains resilient against rising costs and supply challenges.



Why Water Matters to Your Organisation, Right Now:

- **Patient Safety:** Clean water is essential for hygiene, sterilisation, and infection control. Any shortage compromises care quality.
- **Hidden Costs:** Leaks, outdated equipment, and poor controls drive bills far beyond the meter.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** NHS, Care Quality Commission, and environmental standards like HTM 04-01 demand robust water management. Failures carry legal risk.
- **Rising Bills:** Large hospitals can spend hundreds of thousands annually on water. Cutting use by just 10–20% translates into significant annual savings.

Your Water Footprint: Where It Goes & Why It Matters

- Sanitation & Patient Use (30–40%): Toilets, taps, showers, hand-washing stations.
 - High-volume, daily, critical for hygiene.
- Laundry (20–30%): Linens, scrubs, patient clothing.
 - Intensive and often continuous use.
- Sterilisation & Medical Equipment (10–20%): Autoclaves, cleaning, cooling.
 - Vital for infection control.
- Kitchens & Catering (10–15%): Meal prep, dishwashing.
 - Significant but secondary to clinical use.
- HVAC & Cooling (5–10%): Chillers, boilers.
 - Energy and water-intensive, often overlooked.
- Landscaping & Non-Clinical (5–10%): Grounds, cleaning of public spaces.
 - Can be optimised with efficient systems.

Understanding your footprint helps identify where risks and inefficiencies lie. Focus efforts where water is most critical to safety and costs.

Smart Investments: Long-Term Security & Value

- **Greywater Recycling:** Reuse sink and shower water for flushing. Cuts demand by 20–30%+.
- **Rainwater Harvesting:** Collect for irrigation and non-clinical uses.
- **Efficient Laundry Systems:** Invest in commercial low-water-use models.
- **Water-Efficient Sterilisation Units:** Modern autoclaves consume significantly less water.
- **Smart Metering & Sub-Metering:** Real-time tracking enables rapid leak detection.

Investments future-proof operations, reduce long-term costs, and build resilience against rising water prices.

Your Hidden Drain

- **Undetected Waste:** A leaking toilet can waste over 20,000 litres per year.
- **Regular Checks:** Daily inspections of taps, toilets, showers, and pipework.
- **Meter Monitoring:** Compare night-time use against baseline. Unexpected flow = leak.
- **Smart Monitoring:** AMR systems detect anomalies instantly and prevent damage.

Preventative monitoring avoids large losses and protects critical infrastructure.

Engage Your Team: Build a Water-Smart Culture

- **Training:** Encourage clinical and non-clinical staff to identify and report leaks.
- **Clear Procedures:** Make water checks part of cleaning and maintenance routines.
- **Recognition:** Reward departments that demonstrate measurable savings.
- **Patient Engagement:** Where appropriate, promote sustainability measures as part of wider ESG reporting.

A culture of stewardship empowers staff and reassures patients, regulators, and investors.

Be Prepared: Manage Water Supply Risk

- **Risk Mapping:** Assess risks such as drought, burst mains, or contamination.
- **Emergency Planning:** Ensure access to backup water supplies (tank storage, bottled water).
- **Critical Continuity:** Identify essential areas (operating theatres, sterilisation units) and plan redundancy systems.
- **Supplier Coordination:** Confirm your utility's resilience plans and escalation processes.

Water is mission-critical in healthcare. Resilience planning protects patients, staff, and reputation.

Next Steps: Your Action Plan

- **Baseline Your Use:** Gather bills and track water consumption.
- **Audit:** Identify key pressure points and quick wins.
- **Prioritise:** Target safety-critical areas first, then efficiency gains.
- **Engage Staff:** Embed water efficiency in daily routines.
- **Plan Investments:** Build a roadmap for major upgrades.
- **Monitor & Report:** Track results, review annually, adapt as needed.



Need Support? Let's Talk

Want support optimising your facility's water resilience?

We help healthcare organisations cut consumption, reduce waste, and improve control, all while safeguarding patient care.

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