



# River Thames Waterways Customer Charter 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

Our service for navigation customers on the River Thames from Cricklade to Teddington.

Welcome to the River Thames. We want all of our navigation customers to enjoy using the River Thames and we aim to deliver a great service. This charter explains the service we will provide between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018.

## 1. Lock service

In consultation with boating representatives, we have established those locks at which it is most important to provide assisted passage to boaters. Throughout the peak and off-peak seasons we will give priority to placing staff at these locks. However we still aim to deliver the best possible service at every lock during peak season. With the support of volunteers, we will offer a full service at priority locks as far as possible by providing cover for staff breaks and weir work. We will also enhance service where increased demand can be predicted e.g. during regattas or other river events.

During low season assisted passage cannot be guaranteed (standard service) but usually at least 50% of our locks will be manned.

Further details of the services we aim to provide and the seasons can be found at the end of this document on the Lock Keeping Service Targets page.

We report in detail on three levels of service: full, standard and basic at our Thames Navigation User Forum which meets 3 times a year, and also in our River Thames annual report which is published on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-annual-report>.

### Lock keepers' hours of duty:

July and August 09.00 – 18.30;  
May, June and September 09.00 – 18.00;  
April and October 09.00 – 17.00;  
November to March 09.15 – 16.00.  
Lunch break 13.00 – 14.00.

### Our aspiration

Target	Ambition
Our priority locks (excluding Teddington Lock which is manned 24 hours) are single manned through the peak season.	The top 10 of our priority locks (as indicated with ** on the service target page) are single manned 80% of the time between 1 July 2017 to 13 September 2017.

Single manned refers to one lock keeper working at one lock during a working day. Double or split manned refers to one lock keeper working at two locks during a working day, time during the day will be split between two different locks. Therefore there will be periods of the day when each lock will be on self-service.

## 2. Regulation and enforcement plan and activity

We support a safe and enjoyable environment for our customers. Each year we develop a plan to explain the enforcement activity we will carry out to protect the river, customers and our income. For a copy of our enforcement plan, see

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-enforcement-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-enforcement-plan).

### Our aspirations

Target	Ambition
Increased awareness amongst boaters and accommodation owners of the compliance and law enforcement activity we carry out including planned campaigns and exercises to identify offenders.	In addition to our regular river patrols, 12 targeted 'flag days' (maximum number of patrols are out across the river on a dedicated day) are carried out between 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.
We protect essential income and raise awareness whilst acting as a firm but fair regulator.	Reduce identified boat registration evasion to 5% by the end of the registration year (31 December 2017).
We protect essential income and gather information or take appropriate action against owners of unlicensed structures in the river. We also take time to educate and increase awareness of the need to licence structures (also known as accommodations).	Reduce unlicensed accommodations to 50% of those accommodations identified as unlicensed as at 1 April 2017.
We protect essential income and work with our appointed contractors to effectively manage our transient '24 hour' overnight moorings. We promote maximum availability and flexibility of arrangements to legitimate moorers for stays over 24 hours.	Increase our mooring income revenue by 20% year on year.

## 3. Maintaining our lock sites and facilities

We provide and maintain safe access to our lock sites and facilities. When we receive reports of facility breakdowns we arrange repairs as soon as we can.

We provide information about facilities that are available at locks at

[www.gov.uk/river-thames-bridges-locks-and-facilities-for-boaters](http://www.gov.uk/river-thames-bridges-locks-and-facilities-for-boaters).

## 4. Maintaining the River Thames for boating

We keep our 45 locks (lay-bys, gates and chambers) in safe, working condition for boating.

We provide customers with information about any restrictions to using the river by email, on Floodline, at locks and at

[www.gov.uk/river-thames-conditions-closures-restrictions-and-lock-closures](http://www.gov.uk/river-thames-conditions-closures-restrictions-and-lock-closures).

We give customers at least 10 days' notice for planned restrictions lasting up to 24 hours including events/regattas, and at least 10 weeks' notice for planned restrictions lasting more than 24 hours. For unplanned restrictions we provide information as soon as we can.

We arrange repairs immediately when we receive reports of critical lock breakdowns.

We maintain a navigation channel, normally the middle third of the river, and work with landowners to remove trees and other objects obstructing it as soon as possible after they are reported.

We mark underwater obstructions we are aware of in the navigation channel and use signage to indicate the navigation channel and danger areas. Shoals in the navigation channel will be removed as soon as practicable.

For details of maximum recommended boat dimensions, bridge heights and drafts please see [www.gov.uk/river-thames-bridges-locks-and-facilities-for-boaters](http://www.gov.uk/river-thames-bridges-locks-and-facilities-for-boaters).

## Our aspirations

Target	Ambition
We maintain a clear navigation channel for river users.	Shoals are marked or removed within a week of us being made aware of them and if marked are removed at the earliest opportunity.
We offer a professional service to everyone we work with and are committed to getting it right first time.	Our commendations increase by 10% from 2016 to 2017 figures and our complaints reduce by 20% compared to the same period.

## 5. Managing water levels

We manage water levels to balance the many uses of the river, including boating, retaining enough for water companies to extract, managing flood risk and ensuring conservation sites, fisheries and water quality are protected. We measure water levels at lock sites and monitor them 24/7.

We operate the weirs and other structures to provide the best conditions possible for all uses of the river. Our ability to control water levels may change in flood or drought conditions.

For current river levels as measured by the Environment Agency visit <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels>.

## 6. Flow Management

The Waterways team will continue to work with Canoe England, and local stakeholder groups, to improve opportunities to use Environment Agency structures and flow management for white water training and events, where deemed appropriate. We will also work with stakeholders to ensure any development on sites, or adjacent to them, for example hydropower schemes, do not have an adverse effect on existing uses.

## 7. Raising awareness of river conditions

River flows can sometimes be hazardous for boating, for example after heavy rain. We update our information and advice on river conditions, by 11.00 each day, at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/riverthamesconditions](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/riverthamesconditions). We also provide information by displaying warning boards at lock sites during increased flows, showing the conditions upstream and downstream of the lock.

## 8. Responding to incidents

We support the emergency services in dealing with emergency river incidents. In an emergency, you must call 999, or the European emergency number 112.

To report non-emergency river-related incidents, including pollution incidents, call our 24 hour incident hotline 0800 80 70 60. We will respond as soon as we can or advise you on the best course of action. See [www.gov.uk/check-river-conditions-and-closures/river-thames](http://www.gov.uk/check-river-conditions-and-closures/river-thames) for a list of riverside access points for the emergency services. It is strongly recommended that a copy is kept on board your boat.

## 9. Registering your boat

All boats kept or used on the non-tidal River Thames must be registered with us. We provide a registration plate which you must display on your boat where it can readily be seen by our officers at all times. Ideally this should be on a forward facing window or surface. For boats not based on the River Thames, short period registration is available to buy in advance, or from most locks. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-boat-registration-requirements/river-thames-boat-registration-requirements-october-2016> for more information

## 10. Further information

Further information about boating and other activities on the Thames can be found on [www.gov.uk/environmental-management/boating](http://www.gov.uk/environmental-management/boating). This customer charter is produced after consultation with a range of customer representatives and we would like to thank those organisations that have offered their help and advice

# River Thames lock keeping service targets 2017 to 2018

	Season		
	Peak	Off-peak	Low
	Easter, May and spring bank holiday weekends, 1 July to 13 September	1 April - 30 June and 14 September - 30 September	1 October - 31 March
St John's			
<b>**Buscot</b>			
Grafton			
Radcot			
Rushey			
Shifford			
Northmoor			
<b>**Pinkhill</b>			
<b>**Eynsham</b>	 <p>Standard service plus</p> <p>Assisted passage offered for published duty hours. Staff breaks and weir work periods may be covered by volunteers.</p>	 <p>Standard service</p> <p>Assisted passage offered for published duty hours though staff breaks and weir work periods may not be covered.</p>	 <p>Basic service</p> <p>Assisted passage cannot be guaranteed.</p>
*Kings			
Godstow			
Osney			
Iffley			
*Sandford			
*Abingdon			
Culham			
Clifton			
Day's			
Benson			
Cleeve			
Goring			
Whitchurch			
Mapledurham			
<b>*Caversham</b>			
Blake's			
<b>*Sonning</b>			
Shiplake			
*Marsh	 <p>Standard service plus</p> <p>Assisted passage offered for published duty hours. Staff breaks and weir work periods may be covered by volunteers.</p>	 <p>Standard service</p> <p>Assisted passage offered for published duty hours though staff breaks and weir work periods may not be covered.</p>	
<b>*Hambleton</b>			
*Hurley			
Temple			
<b>**Marlow</b>			
Cookham			
<b>**Boulters</b>			
<b>**Bray</b>			
<b>**Boveney</b>			
<b>**Romney</b>			
Old Windsor			
Bell Weir			
Penton Hook			
Chertsey			
<b>**Shepperton</b>			
*Sunbury			
<b>**Molesey</b>			
<b>*Teddington</b>			

**Full service**  
Continuous assisted passage offered throughout published duty hours. All staff meal breaks will be covered.

**Standard service - plus**  
In addition to Standard Service volunteers may be able to enhance this by covering lunchbreaks or weir work.

**Standard service**  
Assisted passage offered for published duty hours though staff breaks, weir work and maintenance periods may not be covered.

**Basic service**  
Assisted passage cannot be guaranteed although this may be offered during published duty hours when a lock keeper is on site. In Low Season lock keepers may be working at more than one site in which case at some times a lock may not be manned and Self Service signs will be displayed.

**\*\* Top 10 Priority lock**

**\* Priority lock**

**Hours of duty**  
July and August: 9.00-18.30  
May, June and September: 9.00-18.00  
April and October: 9.00-17.00  
November to March: 9.15-16.00  
Lunch break: 13.00-14.00

We will do all we can to provide the best possible service throughout the year. We will seek to enhance service where increased demand can be predicted e.g. during regattas or other river events.

**Would you like to find out more about us  
or about your environment?**

**Then call us on**

**03708 506 506** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

**email**

**enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk**

**or visit our website**

**[www.gov.uk/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)**

**incident hotline 0800 807060** (24 hours)

**floodline 0345 988 1188** (24 hours)

Find out about call charges: [www.gov.uk/call-charges](http://www.gov.uk/call-charges)



Environment first: Are you viewing this on screen? Please consider the environment and only print if absolutely necessary. If you are reading a paper copy, please don't forget to reuse and recycle if possible.