

EA - NGWCLC

Box 5

The National Groundwater
and Contaminated Land Centre

GROUNDWATER PROTECTION POLICY



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



GROUNDWATER PROTECTION POLICY

The Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater was first issued in 1992. It has achieved significant success with the approach being followed by many others around the world, from Scotland (SEPA) to South Africa. The document has now been updated to include the latest changes in legislation and refocus the Policy to highlight the wider role of the Environment Agency.

Groundwater resources, both in quality and yield can be put at risk by a variety of human activities. These can range from specific point sources of potential pollution such as landfills, chemical works and petrol stations to diffuse pollution from agricultural land use practices and atmospheric fall-out spreading over large areas. All of these human activities are subject to legislative control to varying extents but they can also be regulated through guidance, codes of practice and best practice recommendations.

The Policy document has been updated but the main sections remain as before and are divided into two broad areas presenting the conceptual basis for risk-based decision making followed by a number of policy statements in activity areas such as:

- Control of groundwater abstraction
- Physical disturbance of aquifers and groundwater flow
- Waste disposal
- Contaminated land
- Disposal of liquid effluents and slurries
- Underground discharges
- Diffuse pollution of groundwater

The policy is presented as a framework within which decisions should be placed. This is not intended to be a prescriptive approach because of the complexities of assessing movement of



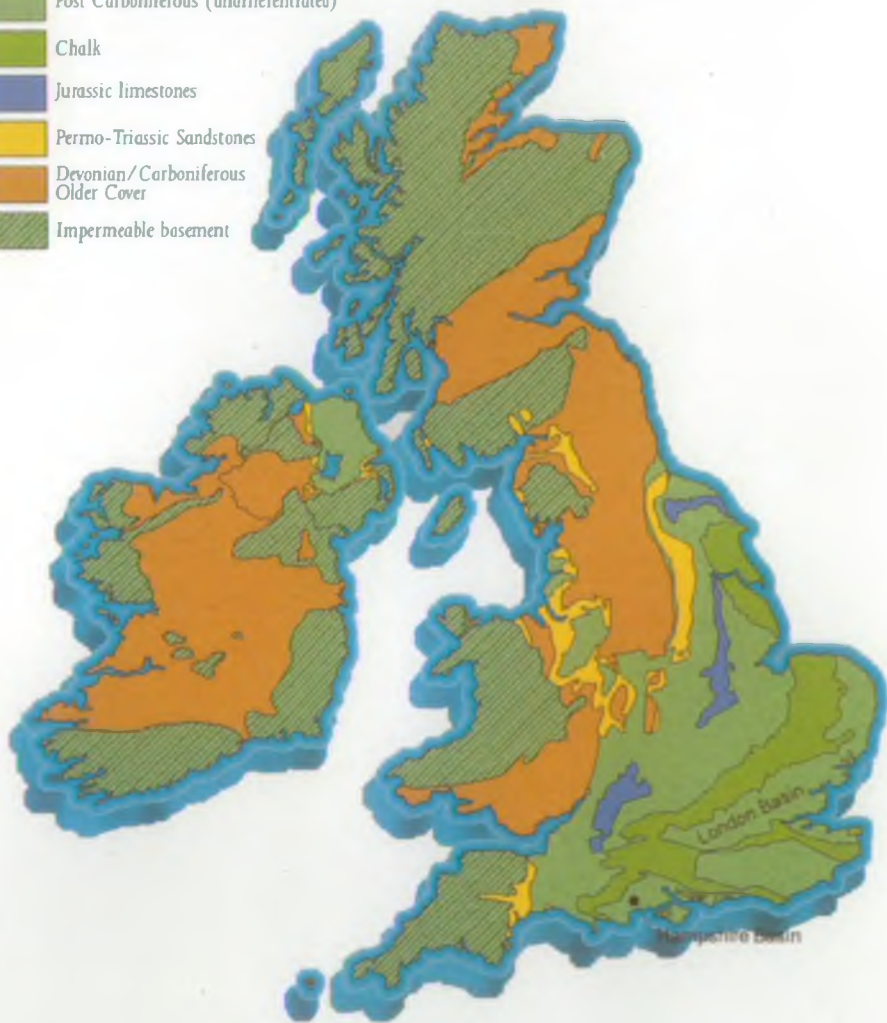
pollutants in the subsurface. Rather, it lays out the Agency's broad approach to both existing risks and new developments.

The policy is underpinned by published groundwater vulnerability maps and groundwater protection zones and will increasingly be supported by more

detailed policy and guidance. Assessment methodologies and software systems are being developed to allow better informed and consistent decision making on a site specific basis.

The Agency's updated policy is available through The Stationery Office.

-  Post Carboniferous (undifferentiated)
-  Chalk
-  Jurassic limestones
-  Permo-Triassic Sandstones
-  Devonian/ Carboniferous Older Cover
-  Impermeable basement



MANAGEMENT AND CONTACTS:

The Environment Agency delivers a service to its customers, with the emphasis on authority and accountability at the most local level possible. It aims to be cost-effective and efficient and to offer the best service and value for money.

Head Office is responsible for overall policy and relationships with national bodies including Government.

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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GENERAL ENQUIRY LINE

0645 333 111

The 24-hour emergency hotline number for reporting all environmental incidents relating to air, land and water.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY EMERGENCY HOTLINE

0800 80 70 60



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