


How we're delivering our purpose: greener



Managing rain where it falls.

 Image: Raingardens and planters are helping to slow the flow at St Edmund's RC Primary School in Manchester



Schools invite
nature into their
playgrounds to
help tackle rain

- ▶ Watch this video to find out how we're introducing green spaces into grey playgrounds across the North West

Case study:

Managing rain where it falls

We're transforming how the North West manages its plentiful rainfall by introducing nature-based features that help rain soak away naturally.

Through our sector-leading £280 million rainwater management programme, we're bringing these greener approaches into community, commercial and public spaces, helping places manage rainfall more sustainably while creating healthier, more biodiverse environments for local communities. This builds on our award-winning Resilient Rainwater pilots, which showed how natural solutions can enrich local places and help prepare them for a changing climate.

Rather than relying solely on traditional hard infrastructure, we design outdoor spaces so they can absorb, filter and slow rainfall at the surface. By reducing the amount of rainwater unnecessarily entering the wastewater network, we support cleaner, healthier waterways while also enhancing the quality of local places.

Investment that delivers wider value

While the programme's ultimate aim is to reduce the volume of rainfall entering the sewer system, every scheme delivers much more than water management. Greener interventions bring nature back into everyday settings, support biodiversity, reduce carbon and help cool urban areas. They create more welcoming, attractive spaces for recreation and learning, and contribute to local regeneration and placemaking.

Our partnership approach enables us to unlock even greater value. Working with local authorities, community groups, developers and regional partners, we align rainwater management with wider ambitions for net zero, active travel routes, healthier streets and stronger local economies. By replacing hard, impermeable surfaces with green design, we're improving resilience while enhancing the everyday places where people live, work and learn.

Project FLOW: creating living educational spaces

Schools are a powerful example of the programme in action. Through Project FLOW (Future Leaders of Water), we're helping schools adapt to heavy rainfall while inspiring pupils to value water and nature. With a goal of working with 400 schools by 2030, we're already well underway.

In partnership with the Environment Agency and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and aligned with the Integrated Water Management Plan, we prioritised 15 schools facing surface water challenges. We worked with teachers and designers to install raingardens and large planters that soak up rainfall naturally. These features slow the flow of water, encourage wildlife and transform playgrounds into living educational environments where pupils can learn about climate, habitats and stewardship first hand.

Each school also received a water-efficiency audit to fix leaks and install water-saving devices – saving more than 15,000 litres of clean water every day and over £50,000 across ten years, helping schools reinvest in pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Outcomes and future impact

Across the first 15 schools, Project FLOW has created vibrant new green spaces and almost 136,000 litres of rainwater storage, reducing the amount of rainfall entering the wastewater network and enriching local habitats. We're now extending our approach across the region and to other education settings, supported by outdoor learning with partners.

By managing rain where it falls, we're improving local nature, supporting healthier communities and building places that are ready for a changing climate, while inspiring the next generation to care for the natural world.

Delivering value for



This is creating value for the environment, local communities, and customers.