



Llywodraeth Cymru
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for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Today marks a significant and positive step forward in our journey to improve and protect Wales' exceptional bathing waters. The laying of the Statutory Instrument to strengthen the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 in both the Senedd and UK Parliament sends a strong signal of our shared commitment across governments to safeguarding the health of our waters and the wellbeing of those who enjoy them. This milestone reflects months of collaboration and dedication, and sets the foundation for a more modern, responsive, and locally attuned approach to bathing water management.

We are now moving ahead with a programme of meaningful reforms that will strengthen protections and introduce greater flexibility to meet local needs:

- The removal of automatic de-designation will ensure that vital efforts to improve water quality are not halted before they can have a lasting effect.
- Feasibility assessments of a site before it is designated will allow us to take a more proactive and targeted approach to creating safe, environmentally sustainable and appropriate bathing sites the public can trust.
- Flexibility in the bathing season enables the adaptation of the season to the local environment, keeping our policies in line with changing environmental conditions and bathing patterns.

Complementing these core reforms are several technical amendments designed to modernise practices, simplify regulatory processes, and improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of water quality management. These updates will ensure the Bathing Water Regulations remain fit for purpose, while minimising unnecessary burdens on Natural Resources Wales.

With new guidance and tools being developed ahead of the 2026 bathing season, we are empowering applicants with the clarity and confidence they need to navigate the new

system. This is about more than regulation, it's about enabling progress, supporting outdoor bathing, and responding to the growing enthusiasm for wild swimming and water-based wellbeing.

Wales is home to some of the most breathtaking beaches in Europe, and we are proud to be taking action that will help keep them that way. These reforms are a testament to what we can achieve when we work together—across governments, regulators, and communities—with a shared vision for cleaner, safer, and more resilient waters. While this is an important step forward, it is also part of a broader effort to enhance our water governance, strengthen environmental protections, and ensure the highest standards of water quality for generations to come.

Our commitment to protecting and enhancing Wales' natural resources remains steadfast. By continuing to work collaboratively, we can deliver lasting change and build a future where everyone can enjoy the beauty, health, and sustainability of Wales' bathing waters.