



Department
for Environment,
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Toby Perkins
Chair of Environmental Audit
Committee
London, SW1A 0AA

06 October 2026

Dear Toby,

Reappointment of Iain Coucher as Chair of Ofwat

I am writing to inform you that the Government intends shortly to announce the reappointment of Iain Coucher as Chair of Ofwat for a second term, which commenced on 1 October 2026 and ends on 30 June 2029, or once the single water regulator is established in statute.

The decision has been taken to ensure continuity of leadership and governance at Ofwat during a period of significant change for the water sector and as the Government progresses plans to establish a new, single integrated water regulator. The Government considers that retaining experienced leadership at Ofwat during this transition period will help ensure the regulator continues to discharge its statutory responsibilities effectively while preparations for the future organisation are developed and implemented.

The Government will continue to work closely with Ofwat and the Chair during the transition period to ensure that the foundations for reform are laid through the existing regulatory structures in the interim whilst the new regulator is established. The water sector has not worked in the public interest for too long. Fundamental reform is needed to deliver a system that works for people. The Government will work collaboratively with Ofwat and the other regulators in delivering this goal.

Since becoming Chair in July 2022, Iain Coucher has led Ofwat through an important period for the sector, including oversight of Price Review 2024, leadership changes within the organisation and a number of significant regulatory challenges. The Government's assessment is that continuity of leadership is important at this stage, particularly as wider reforms to water regulation are developed and implemented.

This reappointment forms part of a broader transition strategy intended to balance stability within Ofwat with the establishment of the future regulator. Alongside maintaining effective governance at Ofwat, Defra is progressing plans for the leadership and governance arrangements of the new regulator, including the appointment of a Chair-designate and inaugural Board members.

I wanted to ensure you were informed before the announcement is made. This letter is therefore provided as notification of the Government's decision. I have also written to Alistair Carmichael, Chair of Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee in parallel.

I look forward to working with both Committees on the appointment process for the Chair of the new water regulator. We intend that appointment to be made through an open competition in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, and we will engage with the Committees as appropriate in relation to that future process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Hardy', with a stylized, flowing script.

EMMA HARDY MP

Minister of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs