

PFAS in Focus: The UK's Next Move

By **Natasha A. Corb** | **Alexandra D. Bourbon**

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Recently, the United Kingdom unveiled its novel “science-based and evidence-led” PFAS Plan. The plan aims to coordinate action between governments, businesses, and regulators to better understand the sources of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), how they spread, reduce current and future exposures, and protect human health and the environment.

Although the UK's PFAS Plan acknowledges the beneficial properties of PFAS, including tolerance to extreme temperature and pressure, ability to repel oil and water, and chemical resistance, it notes these benefits have resulted in the widespread use of PFAS. As such, the UK emphasizes its PFAS Plan will protect human health and the environment while recognizing “the potential negative impacts on society, consumers and industry.” The UK recognizes its PFAS Plan is not a quick fix and will require time and resources to appropriately assess and implement new regulatory measures while protecting human and environmental health.

The plan sets out expectations of industry, namely that they are proactive in improving the government's understanding of potential PFAS risks and supporting informed consumer choices. Additionally, the plan provides that “[i]ndustry should take steps to manage the risks from PFAS they manufacture and use, and to manage the post-use risks. The transition away from PFAS also presents an economic opportunity.”

At its core, the UK's PFAS Plan is structured around three pillars:

Understanding PFAS sources (build the evidence)

Tackling PFAS pathways (interventions to address the entire PFAS lifecycle, i.e., production, use, disposal, sources, and controlling emissions from legacy sources)

Reducing ongoing exposure to people and the environment (minimize or eliminate exposure routes via drinking water, food, consumer products, etc., and appropriately remediate contaminated environmental media)

Ultimately, the PFAS Plan is a stepping stone for the UK to meet other long-term goals and achieve its overall vision. To monitor implementation and progress, the plan identifies numerous “indicative actions, delivery outlook, and responsible owners”, and provides that statutory review and reporting will be provided in an Environmental Improvement Plan. Read the entire policy paper on the UK's PFAS Plan [here](#).

Given the rapidly evolving PFAS regulatory landscapes, whether local, domestic or international, it is critical for all businesses and industries to proactively monitor these developments and appropriately adapt and respond to ensure compliance.